

Newsletter



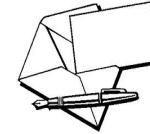
St. John's Methodist Church
Whitchurch
February 2026

Message from the Manse

February 2026

Dear friends,

Love That Goes Deeper



As February arrives, our culture turns its attention to hearts, flowers, and cards as we celebrate St Valentine's Day. While these symbols can be joyful and meaningful, they also invite us to reflect on a deeper and more enduring understanding of love—one rooted not in romance alone, but in compassion, dignity, and self-giving.

Christian love is never meant to be confined to a single day or a single relationship. It is a way of life. In the Gospels, love is always active: listening to the overlooked, welcoming the outsider, standing with those who have been hurt or excluded, and caring for those who long to be seen and valued. Compassion is love made visible.

February is also LGBT+ History Month — a month-long, annual celebration and remembrance of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender history. Its aim is to promote equality and diversity, to acknowledge the changes over the years in people's rights, and to honour the courage of those who have worked, often at great personal cost, for justice and recognition. It is also a time to reflect on the future, and to consider what more can be done to promote true inclusivity and belonging in our communities.

This reflection matters deeply for us as people of faith. God's love knows no boundaries. God calls us to love everyone—without exception. That includes our siblings in the LGBTQ+ community, who have too often experienced rejection, silence, or harm in the name of faith. The love of God is wider than our fears and deeper than our differences. It does not demand conformity before compassion, nor does it place conditions on dignity or worth.

Cont. overleaf

Cont.,

The story traditionally associated with St Valentine reminds us of courage and faithfulness—of choosing love even when it comes at a personal cost. Whether or not we know all the historical details, the legacy points us toward a love that is brave, inclusive, and grounded in God's unwavering mercy.

In our everyday lives, compassion often shows up quietly. It may be a patient conversation, a refusal to judge, an act of solidarity, a prayer offered for someone who feels unseen, or the intentional choice to make our church a safe and welcoming place for all. These small acts matter deeply. They are how God's love continues to move through the world.

As we mark this season, may we ask ourselves: how can we be people of love this week? Who might need affirmation, understanding, or protection from us today?

And how can our church more fully reflect God's love—a love that embraces, heals, and never excludes?

May we grow together in hearts that are open, generous, and compassionate, reflecting the boundless love we have first received.

With every blessing,

Rev Donna

Stewards Letter for February

January has been pretty uninspiring so far, another dark dank day ahead I tell myself, as I look out of the window. But isn't that what you're meant to get in January, says a little voice?

For me this time of winter is generally more challenging than at any other time because for someone who works predominantly outside the days are so short, and so curtailed daylight has a profound impact on what I can accomplish in a day.

The man on the radio told me recently that the third week in January is the lowest point of the year, because new year resolutions have run their course, we learn how much debt we've racked up, and we're still battling with the post-holiday slump in motivation.

Last week I found myself repairing a wooden floor for an old friend, while in the next room there she was heartily stripping the wallpaper from the top of a ladder at the age of 77!

Suddenly she exclaimed 'I'm dead excited today...'

'why's that?' I returned,

'because my daffodils are just starting to show...'

Outside it was cold, damp and murky yet this remarkable bundle of energy found it within herself to be so genuinely positive on this definitely unremarkable afternoon.

What a great thing to be able to say, I thought to myself! Surely there's something for each one of us to think about there; a simple off the cuff remark of optimism and good will can go a long, long way amongst friends and family in these all too readily oppressive January days.

Andrew

A submission from Beryl Posniak

Watching people has always been a favourite pastime of mine!

The kindness of the Church steward who regularly handed me a hymn book when I was a very young child, long before I could read.

The kindness of family, friends and complete strangers of all ages, races and cultures: who give practical help (eg carrying a heavy suitcase / pram up the stairs at a station), an encouraging word or even just a smile.

The kindness and friendliness we as a family have been given since our arrival in Whitchurch 12 years ago. Thank you!

Beryl

Love is Kind (extract)

by Henry Burton (1888)

Have you had a kindness shown?
Pass it on!
'Twas not giv'n for thee alone,
Pass it on!
Let it travel down the years,
Let it wipe another's tears;
Till in heav'n the deed appears,
Pass it on!

Preachers for February

Feb. 1st—Dr. Geoff Dickenson

Feb. 8th—Rev. Helen Stubbs H.C.

Feb 15th—Rev. Obeth Thevanesan

**Feb. 22nd—Rev. Donna Broadbent-Kelly
Local Mission Area Service**

Stewards Rota for February

Feb. 1st—Andrew

Feb. 8th—Mike

Feb 15th—Dot

Feb. 22nd—Hazel



Tea & Coffee for February 2026

February 1st : Avril and Nancy

8th : Brenda & Sarah

15th : Briony and Linda Weston

22nd : Hazel and Linda Weston

If the dates above are not convenient, please let me know.

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

All the Dates for February and beyond

Thursday 12th February: Circuit Meeting on Zoom at 7pm

Sunday 15th February 4pm. Zoom Service. 4pm

Tuesday 11th February. Churches together in Whitchurch. Please speak to Chris or Elaine if you would like to attend.

Wednesday 18th February: Church Council at 7pm.

Saturday 7th March: Afternoon Tea & Singalong

Friday 17th April: Call my Bluff & Fish and Chip Supper

Watch Pew News for more information on these events.

Christmas Quiz.- answers from Chris

1. How many turtle doves? a) **Two**

2. Which country had Christmas trees indoors first? b) **Germany**

3. Tallest cut tree record? c) **Seattle**

4.Colour of ivy fruit? b) **black**

5. Holly berries can be seen all year? b) **False**

6. Which conifer not native to UK? b) **Cedar**

7. What should you do before kissing under mistletoe?
Pick a berry

8. Who wore red tunics earning nickname 'robins'? b) **postmen**

Thank You

I would like to thank all those who serve coffee, tea and biscuits on a Sunday morning after the service.

You really make a difference.

Thank You!

Dot Charlesworth

Coffee Morning

A coffee morning is being organised by the Trefoil Guild (retired girl guiders) on February 7th, 10am to 12 noon at the Watergate Centre to raise funds for the Blood Bikers. This organisation depends entirely on donations and volunteer riders. There will be the usual stalls - tombola, cake, games etc and a raffle. Please support this worthwhile cause.

Gwyneth Rollins

BBT@St Johns



Please join us at Bumps, Babies & Toddlers from 9.30-11.30am for craft, toys, singing, stories, coffee & chat. 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 come and say hello, please speak to someone on the rota.

The Rota for February is below. :

	Leader	Open- ing up	General & Craft	Kitchen
2nd Feb	Kathryn	Briony	Chris & Elaine	Sarah
9th Feb	Kathryn	Mike	Brenda & Dot	Hazel
16th Feb	<i>Half Term</i>			
23rd Feb	Kathryn	Mike	Dot & Chris	Hazel
2nd March	Kathryn	Briony	Sarah & Brenda	Elaine



Taxi

For anyone requiring a lift to church please contact either Pete Shingler or Hazel and if they are able to one of them will bring you to church.

March Newsletter

Please let Mike Nimmo have all your submissions for the next Newsletter by Friday 20th February

In the Quiet

It started as laughter -
the kids giggling
at the funny ways I heard things,
the light mix-ups,
the harmless confusion.
We all smiled then.
I smiled, too.

But the moments of humor
grew fewer,
and the quiet grew larger.
Sounds slipped away
like sand between fingers,
grain by grain
until my days were spent
straining for every syllable.

Listening became labor.
By evening,
I carried a tiredness
that lived deeper than the bones—
a tiredness born of trying,
of leaning in,
of pretending I caught it all.

Each day stretched longer,
lonelier,
shadows gathering in the spaces
where conversation used to be.
Hearing loss felt like a shame
I didn't ask for—
an embarrassment stitched
into my name.

People thought hearing aids
were magic.
But they don't slow voices
that rush past me,
or lift whispers
spoken toward the floor.
They don't turn faces toward mine
when mouths begin to move.

And soon, the ones who once spoke
grow silent,
or step back,
or stop trying.
Avoidance comes quietly, too.
Until I find myself
in a world thinned of sound,
thick with nothing.

Still—
I search for small things
to anchor myself:
little rituals,
quiet tasks,
moments of gentle stillness
that keep me from drifting
too far from who I was.

In the quiet,
I learn to hold on.
In the quiet,
I learn that I am still strong.
In the quiet,
I will carry on.

Diana Gauvreau Hebert 15/01/26

***From the FaceBook Page for the Community for the deaf and
Hard of Hearing (posted here by Dot Charlesworth)***

Caldecott Festival Saturday 21st March

There will be a Caldecott Festival this year, organised by a small team based in Whitchurch. The festival will take place on Saturday March 21 from 10a.m, till 4.30 p.m.

This will be the 180TH birthday of the delightful Mr Randolph Caldecott:” the man who could not stop drawing .”

The aims of the festival are to:

- Promote creativity in any form by people of any age
- Encourage people to live their dreams
- Promote awareness of Randolph Caldecott and his work in Whitchurch and more widely
- Encourage people to come to Whitchurch and enjoy all it has to offer, enriching and promoting our local economy.

At the festival there will be a very short opening ceremony, and a closing ceremony. The former will be at 10 a.m. and the latter at 4.00. Prizes for all the competitions will be presented at the closing ceremony by the Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire, writers, musicians and artists.

The prizes will be for competitions 1-8. Competitions 1-7 are for people of any age. Competition 8 is for pupils only.

Cont,

- 1 Short story –“ Where did the Great She Bear go after she had gone into the shop on the High Street? (THE GREAT PANJANDRUM)
- 2 A Haiku on The Countryside
- 3 A Song about Whitchurch- lyrics to be new, and a tune original or borrowed
- 4 A drawing of Whitchurch High Street today
- 5 Whitchurch in 1866-pictures and words-maximum six hundred words
- 6 The Railway and Whitchurch up to 1866, in any format
- 7 A piece of music about dreams and hopes for “my future”
- 8 Caldecott went to London when he was twenty-six to live. In pictures or words tell us what you will be doing when you are twenty-six

At the Festival there will be a Makers’ Market and Workshops where you can make & create, and music sessions where you can enjoy varieties of music performed to delight you . All the workshop providers and musicians will be paid Arts Council rates of £250 per day or £125 per morning or afternoon session .

The festival will be held biennially in Whitchurch. It will always be on the Saturday closest to the 22 March when Caldecott was born in 1866.

FOR ON THE CALDECOTT FESTIVAL CONTACT:
P: 07900051215
W:www.caldecott.org.uk



The Drawing Room Group

We meet every Thursday morning at St. John's Methodist Church 10am to 12.30pm.

If you already enjoy drawing or if you want to learn please come and join us. Materials are provided if you have none.

Just come and try it the first session is free!

It's the best couple of hours of the week according to Mark, one of our members.

Contact me for more information.

Bob Charlesworth



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