



**St. John's Methodist Church
Whitchurch
March 2026
Newsletter**

Message from the Manse

A Season of Gentle New Beginnings

Dear friends,

We are now in Lent, and dare I ask how you are doing with giving up chocolate or sugar in your tea? I have to confess that I don't give up anything at Lent as I know I would probably fail before the first week is out!

As a mum of three and working full time there needs to be some joys at the end of a stressful week, whether that be a piece of chocolate, (why I don't give it up!) Or the joy of chilling out on the sofa when the children are either out with friends or playing games on the computer and I finally get the remote control. Being a mum though is the best job in the world, seeing these little children, who you created inside you, grow up and learn new things every day is such a privilege and a joy, but it's also hard work at times, and no matter how old they get there are times as a parent you find yourselves in floods of tears and feeling overwhelmed.

This month we celebrate Mother's Day, for most it will be a day of giving thanks and celebrating, for others though it will come with some tears – the loss of our own mothers, the tears of not being able to be a mother, the tears of the loss of children not being here, and perhaps the tears and fears of not feeling that we are good enough mothers to our children.

Mothering is not only a biological role; it is a reflection of God's own nurturing heart. It is seen wherever there is patience, encouragement, comfort, and steadfast love. In our church community, we are blessed by many who "mother" others — the teas and coffees and cakes we serve and not forgetting the toast at BBT and MORE; offering lifts, listening without judgement, playing with the children, visiting the lonely, or simply being present.

May we hold space for every emotion this day may bring — gratitude, grief, longing, or remembrance. As a church family, let us support one another, trusting that God's compassion surrounds us all.

Perhaps this Mothering Sunday we might consider how we can show appreciation — a handwritten note, a small act of service, a phone call, or time spent together. And beyond one day, we can continue to nurture one another throughout the year.

Instead of giving something up for Lent, I have decided to ADD something into my daily life instead. This year I have opted again to follow the Bible Societies 40 Acts of Generosity – this program is a few years old now but its one that I have really valued. Every day we are encouraged to do something to show love and generosity to others because we are compelled to do so because of the generosity God has shown us.

I am also encouraged by seeing and hearing stories of people showing generosity to others. I was really touched recently when someone offered to repair William's guitar strings for free when I was asking on the local Facebook page about where I can get it repaired as the nearest place is in Wrexham. I've seen a brave mum talk openly on a Facebook page about depression and her call out to people just like her to meet together for support and the responses of love and generosity that were given. And the little signs of generosity, the bringing in of the bins for the elderly neighbour who would struggle to do so, the generosity of time given to listen, the generosity of cleaning up of the litter in Jubilee Park so all can enjoy, I could tell you many more...

This March as we continue to journey to Easter Day, let us think about the little acts of generosity that we can show to others. But we also need to be generous with ourselves too, there are only so many hours in the day, we can't do it all, and let's face it, we don't get it right all the time, and life circumstances can make things a struggle at time. We also need to give ourselves time and permission for rest and to do the things that give us life. So this March, may we notice the small signs of growth. May we extend care to those who need it. And may we allow ourselves to be renewed — in body, mind, and spirit.

May we take opportunities to step outside, breathe deeply, and notice the beauty around us. A short walk, birdsong in the morning, or the warmth of early sunshine can lift our spirits and remind us of God's faithfulness.

Let this month be one of gentle beginnings, deeper roots, and hopeful expectation. Spring is coming. And with it, the promise of new life.

With blessings

Revd. Donna

Steward's Letter



At the Church Council last night I mentioned that because of the “Big Hole” the Rotary Club were seeking guidance from those groups who, last year, took part in the Canal Trips up to Grindley Brook and back. This year we hope to operate from the Lyneal Trust mooring and were asking if groups were still interested. More attended last year and I’ve kept the door open for them but what made me very happy was a keen interest from others that our members could also take a slot. Transport was not going to be a problem!

Why was I happy? Well it was a clear example of how we see ourselves as a church family. It made me think back almost 70 years to my reason for not continuing to worship in “The Old Parish Church” in my home town of Dumbarton where I always said the elders smiled at you on Sunday and ignored you on Monday. My 55 years experience in various Methodist churches around the country have proved to be welcoming and inclusive with St John’s to the fore. Long may it continue!

Mike

Services & Preachers



Mar 1st	Rev Rob Hilton
Mar 8th	Local Arrangement
Mar 15th	Rev Edna Perry
Mar 22nd	Rev Donna (Holy Communion)
Mar 29th	Rev John Chesworth

TEA & COFFEE ROTA

Please could you provide milk and biscuits, taking the biscuits home if they are not needed. Tea and coffee are provided.

Mar 1st	Elizabeth and Pete
Mar 8th	Chris and Elaine
Mar 15th	Avril and Nancy
Mar 22nd	Brenda and Sarah
Mar 29th	Briony and Linda Weston



**Please also take the tea towels and towel home, wash and return.
If the dates above are not convenient, please arrange a switch**

Zoom Service for March

ZOOM Services will be on Sunday 15th at 4,00pm. Everyone is welcome for a short service and time of fellowship.

Contact Avril for the link.



[This Photo](#)

Lent Lunches for Christian Aid



Churches will take it in turns to host the Lent Lunches for Christian Aid.

There will be homemade soup, a roll, tea & coffee and fruit with a suggested donation of “£5 or give what you can” for Christian Aid.

All lunches will be from **12.30 to 2pm** but the venues vary.

Friday 6th March
to host

Bargates Hall St George

Wednesday 11th March
host

Watergate Centre St Johns to

Wednesday 18th March
munds to host

Watergate Centre St Alk-

Wednesday 25th March
host

Watergate Centre Beacon to

If you are able to help on Wed 11th March when St John's are hosting the lunch at the Watergate Centre please speak to Briony or Brenda.

Many thanks.

We hope as many as possible of you will be able to attend.

Take Time

Take Time to THINK

It is the source of power

Take time to PLAY

It is the secret of perpetual youth

Take time to READ

It is the fountain of wisdom

Take time to PRAY

It is the greatest power on earth

Take time to LOVE and BE LOVED

It is a God-given privilege

Take time to BE FRIENDLY

It is the road to happiness

Take time to LAUGH

It is the music of the soul

Take time to GIVE

It is too short a day to be selfish

Take time to WORK

It is the price of success

Take time to DO CHARITY

It is the key to heaven

(An epitaph to a dear young friend who died climbing in the Alps –ED.)

BBT@St Johns

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

BBT Rota for March.

	Leader	Open up	General & Craft	Tea
2ndMar	Kathryn	Briony	Chris Elaine	Sarah
9thMar	Kathryn	Mike	Chris Elaine	Hazel
16th Mar	Kathryn	Briony	Brenda Dot	Sarah
23rd Mar	Kathryn	Mike	Brenda Dot	Hazel
30 th Mar	<i>No BBT Easter Holidays</i>			

Hope Journey for Easter Friday 13th March

Following the success of our Hope Journey in December when children from Year 3 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 a group of Y4 children at the end of term. If you are interested in being involved by telling the Easter Story, serving refreshments, helping with a craft or welcoming children and guiding them around our Church, please speak to someone on the BBT Rota to

Our Mission in Whitchurch

We as a church have over the past few years have seen our mission to be in the community. BBT and More are prime examples of how we have put this into action. But what else could we do? Where can our gifts and efforts be directed? Is there a better way to do current things?

Our circuit have started a Consultation on Circuit Missionary Strategy and have produced an opening document raising all sorts of issues, questions and options. It is available in the church for reading—additional copies can be produced by any of the stewards. Take it home and digest it.

We all need to be involved as it will affect the future of St John's and we all need to get together to gather views and ideas.

One of the comments we have from visiting preachers is the friendly atmosphere and discussion after Sunday service and this clearly is good mechanism for us all to contribute and listen so we are going to have **coffee morning** for members only.

Coffee Morning
Our Church: Our Town: Our Gifts: Our Mission
Saturday 14th March
10.00 – 11.30

(You don't need to read the circuit document in advance. Your input is more important)

SYMPTOMS OF INNER PEACE

1. Tendency to think and act spontaneously rather than from fear based on past experiences.
2. An unmistakable ability to enjoy each moment.
3. Loss of interest in judging self.
4. Loss of interest in judging other people.
5. Loss of interest in conflict.
6. Loss of interest in interpreting actions of others.
7. Loss of ability to worry (this is a very serious symptom).
8. Frequent overwhelming episodes of appreciation.
9. Contented feelings of connectedness with others and nature.
10. Frequent attacks of smiling through the eyes of the heart.
11. Increasing susceptibility to love extended by others as well as the uncontrollable urge to extend it.
12. Increasing tendency to let things happen rather than to make them happen

Jeff Rockwell.

(Thanks Elaine)

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 has now lasted three years and thousands died . We pray that the a just settlement arises from the peace plan. Gaza , Israel and Yemen are other areas of great concern. Pray for just solutions

Natural disasters such as flooding, fires, earthquakes and climate extremes. Remember the aid workers in these situations. Think of climate change and the governments who need to respond to tackling it in time

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. 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 Thursday. Our Church Council as trustees have responsibilities in making decisions for our church.

Let us pray for Donna that she continues her ministry with us

Then finally ourselves, families and friends - whether joyful or sad we are aware of our needs and those of others.

As we progress through Lent and Easter let us be ready to celebrate our Risen Lord

Other Dates

On March 12th St George's Church are again having a service on The Stations of the Cross to which all are invited.

Churches Together are also having a coffee morning on 20th March in the Market Hall

SOMETHING NEW

On 31st March at 7.00pm we are having a film night with an Easter theme in the long room, Tea and coffee will available.

This is a new venture and all are invited. If successful we will be arranging further showings

Early Warning for April

The Walk of Witness at Tesco's on Good Friday at 11.00 This is an annual event when Members from all the churches have four stops to read, pray, and witness to shoppers in the town. It really does have an impact,

Additionally there will be an organ meditation at 1pm in St Alkmunds.

Extracts from “Life, Love and Laughter” by Rev James Simpson (ex Chaplain to the Queen and Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland

A wealthy and very pious American, well known for his often ruthless business dealings, said to Mark Twain, “Before I die I intend to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. There I will climb Mt Sinai and at the top I will read out loud the Ten Commandments.”

“I have better idea” replied the writer. “Why not stay at home and keep the commandments”

Joe Leckie was a unique character in the Kirk. Not only was he the tallest minister in Scotland, being 6’ 9” in height, his heart was equally big. As a schoolboy he once captained the Scottish Schools Rugby team. The team picture which appeared in the Tattler, had the caption, “Joe Leckie and fourteen tots”.

His first church was in Ayrshire and one night as he was returning home he noticed a small man , rather the worse from drink, staggering home with a sack of coal on his back. “Look” said Joe, “let me help you” Picking up the sack, as though it was nothing more than a bag of sugar, he carried it with great ease to the man’s house and deposited it by his back door.

The following day, Joe discovered the coal had been stolen

The year Pat Cash beat Ivan Lendl in the final of the Australian Open, a spectator held aloft a poster which read, “Cash is better than a cheque.”

More & More!

With all the other dates being mentioned throughout the Newsletter, let's not forget

More on Monday 12 noon to 4 pm

And More on Thursday 12.30 pm to 4.00 pm

Come along for the fellowship!

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

Stewards

March

1st Andrew

8th Dot

15th Hazel

22nd Mike

29th Andrew

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whitchurchphoto@gmail.com

April 2026 Newsletter

Please let Chris Crowther have all your submissions
for the next Newsletter by Monday 23rd March.