*the*LINK



The quarterly magazine of Stockton Heath Methodist Church

SUMMER 2024



Bible story meets flower show. It's the time of year for visiting a flower show. This photo was taken at the RHS Flower Show, Tatton in 2009.

Photos: Julia



Stockton Heath Methodist Church
Charity Commission Number 1134148
Minister: the Rev Jeremy Tresise
Keep in touch on: www.shmc.org.uk;
www.facebook.com/stocktonheathmethodistchurch



Church walking group on Hilbre, 2011. I don't think you will recognise anyone but I liked the scenery! *Photos: Julia*



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Greetings everyone and welcome to summer. I am writing this on the Sunday of the weekend when the Northern Lights were active and could be seen over Stockton Heath. I am feeling rather miffed as I did not see them and could not believe I had slept through one of the greatest light shows in the universe. So far I have not met anyone who did see them but you never know!

I have tried to give this edition more of a feel of summer but have not avoided some of the serious issues affecting our world, such as the situation in Palestine.

One thing I have omitted is a reminder about Walking Day which takes place on Saturday, 14 July, so book the date.

Thank you everyone who provided articles, photos, etc. I struggled for photos this time which is why I have had to raid my collection of photographs. Please do think about sending in anything other people may find interesting, especially past events at this church.

The next magazine sees the start of a new Methodist year so if you would like me to advertise your group or event, please let me know.

Enjoy the summer.

All for now.

Julia

Data Protection: personal records are kept on computer by Rev Jeremy Tresise as minister, and Chris Park as records co-ordinator. If you wish to know what is under your name, please speak to either of them.

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NEXT DEADLINE: Sunday, 4 August 2024



Contact Julia on 650237 or ewhitfield2008@btinternet.com if you wish to include anything in the next edition of *The*Link.

MESSAGE FROM THE REV JEREMY TRESISE

THERE'S NOTHING ORDINARY ABOUT "ORDINARY TIME!"

As you read this newsletter, we have just entered the part of the Church year referred to as "Ordinary Time": the nearly 6 months that takes us from Trinity Sunday in May to the Sunday before Advent in November. At first glance it would appear that nothing special is going on in the Christian calendar, that we are merely marking time, waiting for the next major

If the Church is often accused of remaining quiet, ineffective, not making an impact on the world, then perhaps it is because we are misunderstanding or misapplying the concept of "ordinariness". There is certainly nothing "ordinary" about God's unbounded love for all people, shown most remarkably in and through the sending of his only Son. Time spent serving in God's kingdom, honouring the call God places on our lives should never be described as "ordinary".

In our church festivals, we celebrate the actions of a God whose essential nature is love, who sought us out in love (and continues to search us out). In Ordinary Time, we recognise that the "searching God" is also the "sending God" and He calls us to share in the seeking as He sends us out. God has not loved us with a passion and Jesus did not endure the agony of the cross so we might know them briefly and then turn our backs. There is no call for part-time or temporary Christians or the "almost Christian" as identified by John Wesley in his sermon of that name.

Jesus compared people, who are overwhelmed by other preoccupations and priorities, with seed that is choked by weeds or gobbled up by the birds *(Mark 4:18 -19)*. He said categorically that he has no use in his kingdom for those who start on the Christian path but who then turn back. We must never stop being believers, followers, God's witnesses, workers for the Kingdom. Instead, we are called to be like salt and light to the world: salt that enhances flavour and stops the rot; light that spreads truth, holiness and everything that is of God and his kingdom; light which removes the darkness of injustice, greed, hatred, ignorance and every kind of wrong. There is nothing "ordinary" about that!" In short, we are called to be Christ-like: empowered by the Holy Spirit, faithfully fulfilling God's purpose, helping us to stand out as God's extraordinary people. Our feasts and festivals, dotted as they are at irregular and moveable intervals, still retain their unique ability to feed and nourish us throughout the year as we live out our faith, but let us

never forget that live out our faith we must, (if it is to remain living). Christ is alive in the hearts of those who follow him still.

“Altogether now, THERE IS NOTHING ORDINARY ABOUT THAT!”

Jeremy

NURTURE THE SOUL WITH A THANK YOU

Gratitude has been considered a moral virtue for thousands of years. According to Cicero, who was a Roman lawyer, philosopher and politician born 100 years before Christ, gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all virtues.

Other Biblical virtues include chastity, temperance, charity, diligence, patience, humility and kindness. Kindness is closely linked to the word gratitude, which is derived from the Latin *gratia*, meaning grace, graciousness, and gratefulness. It can be confused with *grazie*, which means thank you. Saying thank you is the response of your grace or gratefulness.

Gratitude is a state of mind that comes from our spirit and is a combination of wonder, appreciation, and the readiness to respond by saying thank you, which itself is an act of returning kindness to someone else. When someone says thank you to you, you are usually left with a nice warm feeling that whatever you did to deserve it was appreciated.

Rabbi Harold Kusner once said this about that nice warm feeling: 'If you concentrate on finding whatever is good in every situation, you will discover that your life will suddenly be filled with gratitude, a feeling that nurtures the soul.'

How much better would our world be today if more people took the time to nurture the souls of others by simply saying thank you?

Association for Church Editors (ACE)

ALL CHANGE FOR THE METHODIST LIVERPOOL DISTRICT

The Methodist Church is currently reviewing its structure, with the aim of merging several existing Districts (Liverpool, Lancashire, Cumbria, Bolton & Rochdale and Manchester & Stockport) into a new North-West England District.

This change will officially start on1 September when the Rev Dr James Tebbutt will become the new District chair.



He is currently the chair of the Cumbria District.

Monthly Zoom meetings are taking place to update anyone interested on progress of the reorganisation.

If you are interested in joining any of the remaining 3 sessions, contact :

nwedcommunication@outlook.com to request the log-in details.

The dates of these sessions are:

10 June
16 July
14 August.

It doesn’t matter if you cannot make every one of them.

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CHANGES CLOSER TO HOME

The Sankey Valley Circuit is currently looking at a new strategy which will cover:

Mission;
Discipleship and Worship;
Reflecting the Core Values of Methodism;
Staffing and Resourcing;
Property and Finance.

We held a meeting in church after the morning service on 5 May when the above were considered.

If you would like to know more, please talk to one of the stewards.

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This magazine has been produced in its current format since the winter edition of 2012-13 and eventually gained some colour pages in the Autumn of 2013. After a recent chat with Jeremy, I am now wondering if it is time for some changes. Discussions are taking place but if you have any suggestions or ideas, please have a word with me. For example, should we have fewer pages? Are the 3 columns a satisfactory layout? Would you like a larger font size? Are the articles of interest to you and, if not, what would you like to see more of/ less of?

I have occasionally said in past issues that I would be happy to hand over the editorship of the magazine, but no-one has rushed to offer their services! Although I am happy to continue, I don’t want anyone to think that I am not prepared to hand over the job.

And now a couple of changes that I am rather sad about.

Firstly, as you may have noticed, I use a lot of articles provided by the Association of Church Editors (ACE). The vice-chair of this organisation, Bob Peters, has recently stepped down. I very much appreciated his articles and so am sorry to see him go, especially as no-one has offered to take over his role so it is currently being carried out by the remaining members of the team. I am not yet sure how this will work out. The most recent articles I have received from them are not what I would choose to include in our magazine.

Perhaps the worst change of all is the resignation of Emma who has been running our Circuit Office for many years and has been printing the magazine for us since 2013. She and her husband are retiring and leaving the area. I will really miss her as she has done a great job all these years. Please pray for her and John, that they will enjoy a happy

retirement, and please pray for whoever will take over Emma's role.



EMMA

EMBRACE
the Middle East

Since the start of the war (in Gaza), Sami has been sheltering in St Porphyrius Church. His story was sent to us by our partner in Jerusalem, Pontifical Mission for Palestine:

My life before 7 October can be described as very beautiful. I was like any young man of my age who aspired to be well-educated and build a successful career. I finished my master's degree in business administration, and my graduation ceremony was actually supposed to take place 2 months [after 7 October]. Earning my MBA was my dream and that of my parents, but unfortunately, it didn't end up that way.

This war took my life's happiness away from me; my father, mother, and other members of my family were killed, and my sister was injured in a bombing on St Porphyrius Church where we were all sheltering. I am alone now, without my parents. Honestly, I cannot describe my situation because I never imagined that this would happen to me. We are always a peaceful people, but this is the will of our Lord.

During this war, I have been able to help people, prepare meals, and anyone in need. We also pray in the church. I have been a member of our church choir and have been active in the church since I was very young.

After the bombing though, I couldn't help out that much because I was taking care of my sister and my aunt, who were both injured in the blast. After a while, my sister got better but unfortunately, my aunt passed away.

The situation was difficult for me and took a toll on my health. I lost 24 kg (52 lbs.) because of what happened to me and my family; losing my house, my things, and our family car.

I wish I could go back to those days when we used to dream and plan our lives, but unfortunately, those things are now shattered.

***

David, Embrace's Programmes and Partnerships Manager for Israel-Palestine, recently spent a week in the West Bank, visiting our partners and seeing first-hand the difficult reality of everyday life there. He says:

'While the attention of the world media has been on the catastrophic situation in Gaza, life in the West Bank has also become intolerable during the past 6 months.

A de-facto lockdown has made movement between cities and towns both restricted and dangerous. An increase in settler attacks and IDF raids have killed hundreds and injured thousands. And an economic crisis - caused by no tourism and over 160,000 Palestinian work permits being revoked - has left millions of people without an income.

As we met with partners, we heard first-hand about how the situation is affecting them both personally and professionally. Yet what intrigued me as I heard the stories and saw the reality of the situation was that even in the midst of this fear and danger, our partners are continuing to boldly serve those in need.

Not only are they continuing with their existing projects but they are expanding their work and implementing new projects in some of the most difficult areas. Rather than letting the fear paralyse them, they are actively moving towards those in need.'

Article from an email from Embrace and used with permission.



David (middle) visits an accessible play area at a centre we help fund near Bethlehem through our partner BASR. The centre is a welcoming space which supports children with additional learning needs.

Photo: Pontifical Mission for Palestine.

A WALK IN A STORM

It was a dreadful spring day weather-wise. Cold, wind and rain in biblical proportions! Yet I was out in it all because my dog, a black Labrador named Lenny, needed to be walked. To make matters worse, we were walking across open fields, so muddy that it was like trying to find your way through a mire.

Each time I threw Lenny's ball he chased eagerly after it, seemingly oblivious to the awful weather. I trudged on after him, mumbling under my breath. Each time he came running back towards me with the ball in his mouth, his tail wagging enthusiastically. He was behaving as if it was a lovely summer's day and he was playing in the sunshine. 'How could he possibly enjoy being out in this!' I thought.

Then I started to think more philosophically. We were both being subjected to the same horrible weather, yet whilst I was only thinking about the cold and wet and wishing I was



Photo: Bing, Creative Commons.

This is not a photo of Lenny!

somewhere else, he was focussing on enjoying the moment regardless of the situation he was in. Perhaps I should be learning from his attitude to life and live for the moment more, rather than always thinking of being in a better place whenever things don't seem to be quite perfect.

Maybe dogs have been given to us in order to show us how to be happy with what we have, rather than always striving to find happiness somewhere else (not to mention all their other attributes that we could learn from, such as loyalty, unconditional affection, etc). Ironically, dog is god spelt backwards.

Jeff Everett. ACE

IN PRAYER

Many years ago, and new to the area of Monkseaton, I came to St Andrew's Presbyterian Church of England to worship. One particular Sunday an Elder was leading worship. He stood in the pulpit and at one point said…*'no one prays these days'*. I was horrified. As a new girl on the block, I wished I had had the courage to stand up and ask, *'How do you know?* How did he know?

Prayer is something Jesus did, often with crowds, with his disciples but also alone away from everyone… time on his own, time to express his concerns and his fears.

Prayer is an intensely emotional personal and yet public experience. Prayer is not a passive action and can encompass all manner of emotions at any particular time; it can be uplifting but also be difficult, difficult to find the words to express extreme sadness, anxiety, despair or anger.

Yet prayer can also be offered in times of celebration, of thankfulness and joy in happier times but even then finding the words to express such emotions might be a struggle.

Revd Dr Carla Grosch-Miller introduced the folks of St Andrew's to the Psalms as a way into prayer allowing us to bring prayers expressing a range of our feelings and needs to God when perhaps we struggle to find the words.

Prayer can be inconsistent at times: when prayer is off our agenda for some quite simple reason, not because you have forgotten but have become overloaded with deep concerns and exhaustion and the words simply won't come. But we need never be wordless. The answer is there in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke – the Lord's Prayer provides us with the words that have been there and used across the centuries to speak to God and they stand today.

Prayer calls for persistence, a persistence to keep open our relationship with God, to persist in prayer and seek the will of God. Prayer is our way of tuning into God, opening our minds and hearts revealing to God who we truly are. Prayer is the core of our relationship with God.

We might not always get what we ask for in prayer but persistent prayer brings us close to God. Prayer is having an intimate relationship with God as individuals but also in a community relationship with God, among family and church family, friends known and perhaps friends still to be known. Direct persistent prayer to God is central to our relationship with God and through our faith in Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. '*No one prays these days*?' Big question and the answer is only known to God.

Dr Ann Sinclair.

Ann is Lay Preaching Commissioner for the URC Northern Synod and a member of St. Andrew's URC, Monkseaton.

For those not aware, The United Reformed Church resulted from the 1972 union of the Presbyterian Church of England and the Congregational Church in England and Wales. St. Andrew's URC in Monkseaton was originally a Presbyterian church and still has many Scottish members, or those of Scottish descent.

REQUIEM MASS BY MOZART

In 1791, 35-year-old Mozart was living in Vienna with his young wife, Constanze, and their children, Karl aged 7 and baby Franz who grew up to become a composer. The family was not well off: income from concerts had almost dried up due in part to the Austro-Turkish war. Mozart was forced to borrow from his friends in order to survive.

In mid-July of 1791 the composer was visited by someone his wife later claimed to be 'a mysterious stranger' who commissioned Mozart to write a Requiem Mass. The stranger was an emissary from Count Franz von Walsegg. The Count was probably going to pass off the music as his own composition; he already had a reputation for doing this! In the succeeding months Mozart came to believe that he was writing his own requiem.

Sadly, Mozart died halfway through the work. In order to claim

the 100 ducats payment, Constanze asked composer Franz Süssmayr to finish the work. There were scraps of manuscript notes on Mozart's desk showing ideas for the rest of the work. Süssmayr used these to complete the music. It is said that Mozart died during the composition of the Lachrimosa section, 'This tearful day'.

Several theories have been advanced about Mozart's early death including a poisoning by Viennese court composer Antonio Salieri who, on his death bed, is reputed to have confessed his responsibility for killing Mozart. This particular theory was the basis for the 19th century play by Pushkin, 'Mozart and Salieri', and the modern play 'Amadeus', by Peter Shaffer, and subsequent film in 1984 by Miloš Forman. Constanze recalled Mozart saying, 'I am sure I have been poisoned; I can't rid myself of this idea'. The medical account of Mozart's passing says that he had 'severe military fever with bumps on the skin'. This term was used in the 18th century for rashes similar to the cereal grain, millet.

The complete Requiem Mass was written for a choir, 4 solo singers, a typical orchestra of the day plus organ and 3 trombones (in those days trombones were mainly associated with funeral music and processions).

Despite its completion by Süssmayr, the Requiem is regarded as one of the greatest religious choral works of all time.

Leslie Ryan, Organist, Mumbles Ministry Area, Swansea

TIME FOR A SMILE

We were making leaflets for a local church, and the client wanted a logo designed with Earth being shielded by the hand of God. I sent the client a proof. Shortly thereafter, I got a call.
Client: The hand looks too human. Please use a hand that looks more like God's.

Source: clientsfromhell.net

During our priest's sermon, a large plant fell over right behind the pulpit, crashing to the ground. Acknowledging his reputation for long-windedness, he smiled sheepishly and said, "Well, that's the first time I actually put a plant to sleep".

Noah had built the ark and had seen the animals on 2 by 2. Time passed and the floods went away and the animals came off the ark 2 by 2, and Noah said "Go forth and multiply". Then Noah saw 2 snakes left on the ark, and asked "Why are you still here?". The snakes replied, "You told us to go forth and multiply, but we are only adders".

Ground control asked the astronaut, "How are you feeling up there?" His reply was, "How would you feel surrounded by 20,000 parts, each one supplied by the lowest bidder!"



REFLECT ON THIS:

The man whispered "God, speak to me"
And a meadowlark sang
But the man did not hear.
So the man yelled, "God, speak to me!"
And the thunder rolled across the sky
But the man did not listen.
The man looked around and said, "God, let me see you"
And a star shone brightly
But the man did not notice.
And the man shouted, "God, show me a miracle!"
And a life was born
But the man did not know.
So the man cried out in despair
"Touch me God and let me know that you are here"
Whereupon God reached down and touched the man
But the man brushed the butterfly away and walked on.

DON'T MISS OUT ON A BLESSING BECAUSE IT ISN'T PACKAGED THE WAY YOU EXPECT.

Submitted by Barbara.
Author unknown.

Photo: Julia



Dramatic Society presents

MY FRIEND MISS FLINT

A comedy by Donald Churchill and Peter Yeldham

Tuesday 9, Thursday 11 and Friday 12 July at 7.30 pm

Tickets from www.ticketsource.co.uk/shmds

Also as part of the Stockton Heath Festival on 4 July at 7.30 pm

Tickets from the Festival Box Office



We had music from Godspell at Jeremy's Advent service.

The photo above is of the 1984 church production of the musical.

Some familiar faces—just a little bit older now. How many can you spot?

Submitted by Brenda.

The Faulkners are delighted to announce the birth of Baby Phoebe Faulkner Dhir, first-born of Charlie and Uma Faulkner, Grandchild to Lisa and Ian and Great Grandchild to Pauline. She was born on Tuesday, 2 April at Warrington Hospital. They are all doing well. We are all delighted!!!

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Sunday, 21 July, 6.30 pm in church: service for the 350th anniversary of the birth of hymnwriter Isaac Watts, entitled 'Joy to the World'. Hazel, Catherine and John are hoping to form a 4-part choir from our Church, Circuit and local churches to lead the singing, with a narrative in between the hymns exploring Watts' life and work . Look our for a flyer coming very soon with more details, but put the date in your diary.



SOME NOTICES FROM ANTROBUS METHODIST CHURCH

Book Sale with tea and cake in the summer. Date to be confirmed.

Antrobus Village Celebration to mark the **80th Anniversary of D-Day** on Thursday, 6 June starting at 6 pm. Tickets available from the Village Shop. Cost £10 to include fish and chips. Entertainment and finishing up with the lighting of a beacon.

There's a **Classic Car Run** on Sunday, 16 June starting with a Big Boys' Breakfast. This is in support of the Ukraine Charity. Everyone is welcome to attend and then watch the cars set off.

Antrobus Village Rose Queen fête will be held on Saturday, 6 July with a procession starting just after 1:00 pm and then an afternoon of traditional fun. A fête service will be held at St Mark's Church at 10:30 am on Sunday, 7 July when the Rose Queen and retinue will be in attendance.

For more information, please contact Ann Bolshaw at annbolshaw@outlook.com.

(Photo from website provided by Antrobus Parish Council)

Janet T spotted an item in the Guardian newspaper reporting the death of **Father Frans von der Hoff**, co-founder of the global Fairtrade Movement, who has died at the age of 84.

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Just a reminder that **Fairtrade Fortnight** this year is from 9 to 22 September, celebrating 30 years of the Fairtrade mark in the UK.

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Karen and David plan to be at Creamfields again this year so please pray for them.

TO FINISH OFF:

"We look forward to the time when the power of love will replace the love of power. Then will our world know the blessings of peace." William E Gladstone.

Does a church steeple with a lightning rod on top show a lack of trust and confidence?

Good manners can mean simply putting up with other people's bad manners.





WORLD DAY OF PRAYER—1 MARCH 2024

Prepared by the Christian women of Palestine
Table prepared for our service at Stockton Heath Methodist Church
Photos: Ann E

