*the*LINK

The quarterly magazine of Stockton Heath Methodist Church

AUGUST—OCTOBER 2025

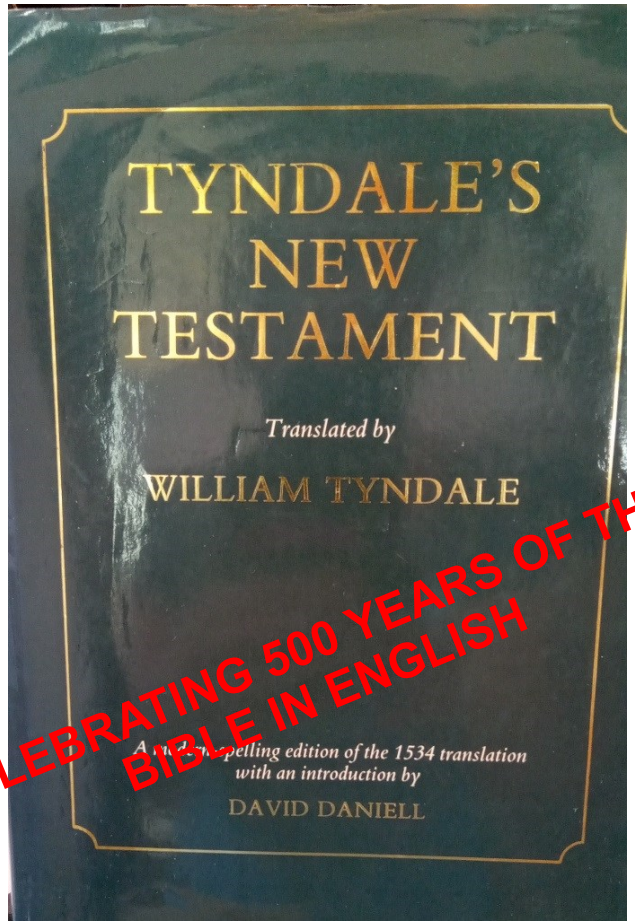


Photo: Julia

Stockton Heath Methodist Church
Charity Commission Number 1134148
Minister: the Rev Jeremy Tresise
Keep in touch on: www.shmc.org.uk;
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CAKE AND CHAT

10 MAY 2025

(Thanks to Chris for the photos)







Chris and Pauline were in charge of Cake and Chat on 10 May as I was away at a wedding. They decided to join in with VE Day celebrations and decorated the café appropriately. Pauline made this wonderful cake. I should be away more often! Julia



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Greetings. I am writing this on a very hot, humid afternoon, which I hate. I am hoping it is going to change tomorrow. How people coped with Walking Day, especially the bands, I shall never know. (See Geoff's photos on page 14.)

If everything goes to plan, we should be seeing the decorators in church this summer so it will be wonderful to have a near-completed revamp of the main worship area. Doubtless there will always be something else to do.

Thank you to everyone who submitted photos and/or articles, including The Rt Hon Baroness Theresa May! You will have to read the mag to find out what she has said!

The church family has been busy lately with the performance of Maria Marten over Festival Week, which was wonderful and very well performed. Then Hazel's latest production took place on 13 July to celebrate 500 years of the Bible in English. 'Tell Me the Stories of Jesus' was powerful (according to someone who was at the service) and certainly informative as I knew very little about William Tyndale. So, well done Hazal. What's next?

Now we head into a new Methodist year (meet the new President and Vice-President on pages 5-6).

Enjoy the summer, especially if you have holiday plans, and I'll be asking for more articles and photos come September!

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.

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

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NEXT DEADLINE: Sunday, 5 October, to cover November, December and January.

ACE
Member Editor 2024
Association for Church Editors

MESSAGE FROM THE REV JEREMY TRESISE

I'VE NEVER GOT US COMPLETELY LOST!



I've never got us completely lost! We've always made it safely home ... eventually!

Given the number of times a walk with the family used to turn out not *quite* how or where I expected it to, their faith in me remains astonishingly high and, I have to say, is quite touching. Is it my fault that a footpath peters out or takes us across a field of waist-high wheat and then into a hedge? No! Yet this did happen to us one summer, in a field somewhere in Norfolk! We did get back to the cottage we were staying in but it was getting dark when we did. Like I said, I've never got us completely lost!

During the summer months this year, the lectionary readings are covering The Letter to the Hebrews, which majors on the Old Testament figures of Abraham and Sarah. In Genesis, Abraham and Sarah set out on a journey not knowing where they were going.

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; and he set out, not knowing where he was going. (Hebrews 11:8)

God must have a sense of humour! It seems I am not the only one who has set out on a journey and not been entirely certain where they would be going. For Abraham, this was a journey undertaken "by faith" because of the trustworthiness of the One who had called him. It wasn't a blind step of faith, but it was a step that was taken based upon what his experience had taught him; namely that God could be trusted even if Abraham did not know exactly where he was going.

I am occasionally asked what I think will happen to the Methodist Church in the future. I am touched that people think I might have the answer - I don't! I have no greater knowledge than the next person of precisely what the future might hold. However, I do know that we journey on with the God who is faithful and whose promises can be trusted. I also have the sneaky feeling that God has not finished with the Methodist Church just yet but that he is also calling us to set out for a new place.

I acknowledge that changes cause us to have a lot of uncertain feelings – "Where are we going?" I hear you cry. Our circuit of Sankey Valley is no different from other circuits in seeking to remain faithful to the calling of the Methodist Church in

changing times and with diminishing resources. I acknowledge that this means setting out on a journey whose end is uncertain, but we do so with a God by our side who is to be trusted. Like Abraham, “by faith” we obey the one who is faithful to us.

Perhaps God is saying to us, “relax, I’ve never got us completely lost!”

Peace

Jeremy

OUR NEW PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENT OF CONFERENCE



The Revd Richard Andrew is currently chair of the Darlington District. Growing up in rural North Yorkshire, he studied philosophy and theology in London before moving into the South-East and Yorkshire industry.
He trained at Wesley House, Cambridge before joining a circuit in Sheffield, training ministers and teaching theology in a university setting as Director of York Institute and working in the Connexional Team as Director of Learning and Development.

He has a deep passion for the renewal and refreshing of the Methodist Church and the rediscovery of its DNA as a growing, inclusive, evangelistic and justice-seeking church.
He is married to Debbie a former teacher and now a Church and Community Worker in Teesdale with 2 grown-up children, Tom and Becky.

He enjoys walking, reading, hospitality, guitar and watching Middlesbrough FC.

The Revd Richard Andrew says, “I am humbled and excited by the nomination of the Conference. I have always believed that it is essential that we live by hope and I am really encouraged by everything we are doing together as a Church as we join together with God and as we seek to be a growing, inclusive, evangelistic and justice-seeking Church.

"God is bringing something new to birth amongst us and I pray we might be open to the leading of the Spirit as we recognise that and follow in the footsteps of Jesus.”



Matthew Forsyth is a local preacher and steward. He is the Mission Team Leader in the Northampton Methodist District. Within this role, Matt leads a diverse team of lay and ordained leaders.

As Mission team Leader, Matt works to see a flourishing, sustainable network of circuits of worshipping communities that are growing, evangelistic, justice-seeking, and inclusive in their outworking of the mission of God. That means areas like New Place for New People (NPNP), Justice, Dignity and Solidarity (JDS), and the lay leadership development form key parts of his role. Matt is a member of the Missions Committee and currently serves on the NPNP guiding team.

Having studied Theology, worked as an estate agent, and spent time working as a fundraiser for All We Can to name a few roles, Matt remains firm in his calling to lay leadership. As such, Matt serves as a trustee of a Christian Schools Charity in his home city, Peterborough (CROPS), and offers as a mentor to teenagers in his spare time.

With his wife Amy, his 3 kids, and bouncy cockapoo, any time that is offered is given to their care and attention. Matt has a deep desire to listen, encourage, and play his part in the flourishing of a church on the journey of being inclusive, just seeking, and evangelistic.

Matt Forsyth says, “I am humbled to serve the church in this role. I am deeply aware of the responsibility to represent the voice of the lay leaders across the Connexion. I hope to listen well and work in partnership with the President so that together we can encourage the church to continue its journey on becoming an inclusive, justice-seeking and evangelistic church.”

(Text and photographs from the Methodist Church website)

MEET OUR CHAIR OF THE NORTH-WEST DISTRICT— DR JAMES TEBBUTT

He will be joining us in worship on 2 November.

See Geoff’s article on the next 2 pages.



Laying the foundation stones in June 1905

Photo from the Stockton Heath Methodist Church website

CELEBRATION 120!

Week-ending 2 November

Who likes an excuse for a celebration?

On 2 November 1905 our Church building was opened:

"The building was opened at 3.0 pm on 2 November 1905 by Miss Bessie Dutton of Moore" reported the Warrington Guardian.

Miss Dutton said… "This new church is eloquent testimony to the love, enthusiasm and energy in the hearts of those connected with the church."

The celebration will be spread across several events that week as follows:

Midweek – History Evening 7.30 pm *(Date to be confirmed)*

Sights, sounds and reflections from 1905, 1965 and today.
Short reflections from some senior members
History exhibition boards and books
A talk by special guest Kit Heald from the local history society

Friday Night is Music Night – 31 October, 7.30 pm

Light Entertainment evening – an alternative to Halloween.
Music, dance and verse from the years
Concert items
Drama
Dance

Saturday Morning, 1 November 10.30 am until 1 pm

Refreshments to tie in with looking at displays
Craft displays
Art displays
Memorabilia, old photographs and history exhibition

Special service to mark the 120th Anniversary on Sunday, 2 November at 10.30 am with the Chair of District

This could include featuring the worship and activities we have had but also look to the future as by then we will have a refurbished building ready for the years to come.

Music/Singing group
Drama to re-enact opening ceremony in costume
Celebration cake(s)
Worship divided into sections featuring music and anecdotes from these periods:

To include at least one hymn that would have been popular in these 3 time periods:

1905
1964/65 (when Church was refurbished)
Now, 2025

The service to include a blessing on the refurbished Church building.

Family-oriented Evening Worship at 6 pm

Short service led by Jeremy and Hazel *(to be confirmed)*
Theme might be "Light & Dark"
To include some dance and drama

Concludes with fireworks outside, set off from the hall roof, remembering 1905 was the 300th anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot and they would have had fireworks then!

Come in period costume (optional)

Geoff C

The Methodist Church

ALL WE CAN Methodist relief and development

GAZA JUSTICE CAMPAIGN A JOINT UPDATE FROM ALL WE CAN AND THE METHODIST CHURCH IN BRITAIN

05 JUNE 2025

As justice-seekers we can't stay silent! We cannot stay silent in the face of atrocities that continue to be perpetrated in Gaza. The Church institutionally is no expert in international law. But it must take seriously the findings of the top experts in the field, many of whom are adamant that Israel's actions in Gaza constitute the crime of genocide. 'The international community must heed the warnings of genocide and act to avoid being complicit in the loss of tens of thousands of lives. We have a duty to stand in solidarity with our partners on the ground who are bravely continuing their life-transforming work in the face of 'mass forced hunger, mass forced displacement, mass killings and mass atrocities.'[1]

In November, All We Can, the Methodist Church in Britain and the United Reformed Church launched the joint 'Gaza and Lebanon Justice appeal' to raise awareness of the unfolding disaster, and to meet the humanitarian need resulting from the worsening crisis in Gaza and Lebanon. But to give financial support alone is not sufficient. We will act and call for justice.

We believe that all are made in the image of God, each worthy of equal value and dignity. God wills the flourishing of creation and human community within it. We believe, that in solidarity with others, we are called to challenge injustice that contradicts God's plan for a just world.

The Hamas attacks of 7 October against innocent Israeli civilians, and the ongoing cruelty of holding hostages, is criminal. However, the escalation of attacks in the wake of these events in the name of self-defence by Netanyahu's government – resulting in the persecution, killing, and repeated expulsion of Palestinian communities across Gaza and the West Bank must stop. This appalling reality is something that the Church can neither ignore nor condone, for any reason whatsoever.

We have a duty to use our voices and power to challenge what is unjust. The UK government, along with France and Canada in a joint statement, has called on Israel to halt military operations and allow humanitarian aid to enter the territory. It says that 'We will not stand by while the Netanyahu government pursues these egregious actions. If Israel does not cease the renewed military offensive and lift its restrictions on humanitarian aid, we will take further concrete actions in response'. However, despite the

suspension of some arms export licences to Israel in September last year, the UK still supplies components that are used in combat aircraft operations in Gaza, and we are concerned that these concrete actions are an empty threat which will not alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people.

Therefore, we call on the UK Government to act with decency and morality, and to urgently implement these threatened actions. We encourage people to write to their MPs to echo this call. We also ask that people continue to support our partners by donating to our appeal and find out more about their work. We offer this prayer for decision-makers, may they be guided by what is right and have the courage to act.

We commit to working towards a just and lasting peace, and the recognition of the state of Palestine alongside the state of Israel.

Notes: [1] Quakers ask the UK government on Gaza: What more evidence do you need now? | Quakers in Britain

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On Wednesday, 2 July a group from Warrington churches, Amnesty International and concerned individuals met together outside the Town Hall gates to show support for the Palestinian people. It was held to coincide with the action taken by members meeting for the annual Methodist Conference in Telford who also gathered together on Wednesday to show their solidarity with the Palestinians suffering and dying in Gaza. (With apologies to those who arrived after the photo was taken, including Jeremy and some friends from other churches.)



Days before our action The World Council of Churches had issued a statement from their conference in South Africa (24 June 2025)

…"In this spirit, the WCC Central Committee calls for:

Naming the Reality of Apartheid: We recognize and denounce the system of apartheid imposed by Israel on the Palestinian people, in violation of international law and moral conscience.

Implementing Sanctions and Accountability: We call on states, churches, and international institutions to impose consequences for violations of international law, including targeted sanctions, divestment, and arms embargoes. Full support must be given to the International Criminal Court and UN mechanisms investigating potential war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Affirming Palestinian Rights and Freedom: We uphold the inalienable human rights of Palestinians to freedom, justice, return, and self-determination. We demand the end of the occupation and the lifting of the unlawful blockade on Gaza.

Support for the resilience and witness of Palestinian Christian churches and communities, upholding their right to remain on their land and to freely practice their faith."

Ann

HARVEST

As we celebrate harvest and give thanks for the food we have to eat, let us remember the millions of people in the world who do not enjoy such a luxury.

The following information is provided by the UNHCR

Cycles of extreme flooding and drought are driving food shortages, hunger and malnutrition, and refugees and people forced to flee are among the hardest hit.

Acute hunger is when people face hunger for a long, sustained period, putting their lives at risk. Approximately 343 million people are currently facing acute hunger in at least 74 countries around the world.

Conflict, displacement, poverty and extreme weather all contribute to food shortages and hunger. Refugees and people forced to flee are often among the hardest hit and the least able to recover.

85% of affected people suffer because of conflict which disrupts the growing, production and transportation of food, leading to food shortages and massive price increases. In turn, food shortages often lead to tension and conflict, creating a vicious cycle.

16 of the 22 'Hunger Hotspots' can be found in Africa, including countries such as South Sudan, Kenya and Malawi.

While there are thousands of edible plants in the world, just 15 species provide 90% of the world's food energy intake. Rice, maize and wheat make up two-thirds of this.

Peanuts are an excellent source of nutrients. They contain protein, fibre and a range of vitamins and minerals, as well as being dense in calories. In Dzaleka Camp in Malawi, UNHCR is supporting refugees to grow peanuts and turn them into delicious peanut butter. This initiative is providing people with access to nutritious food, and a stable source of income too.

As of October 2024, 42 of South Sudan's counties had been affected by flooding, along with more than a million people. In Maban County, UNHCR teams are working to build 26 kilometres of dikes to protect communities and farmland from the rising floodwaters.

In Bor, a flooded part of South Sudan, it's no longer possible to grow

crops or graze cattle. Instead, women resort to harvesting waterlily bulbs to eat. They collect the waterlily bulbs from the floodwaters and although they do offer some nutritional value this is a last resort for people who have lost everything. Harvesting waterlily bulbs also comes with hidden dangers – such as submerged branches in the water – which can make the work perilous.

A WAKE UP CALL TO THE WORLD

By The Rt Hon Baroness Theresa May of Maidenhead

If you stop to ask anyone in the street about slavery they would probably tell you it was abolished hundreds of years ago. After all, in the UK the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act of 1807 made it illegal to trade in enslaved people across the British Empire and in 1833 the Abolition of Slavery Act ended the use of enslaved labour.

More than that, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in December 1948 states clearly that *'No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms'*. Yet today it is estimated that there are 50 million people in slavery of one form or another around the world. It is happening in every country including the UK. All too often it is hidden in plain sight.

We may speak of victims and survivors, but these are not just victims and survivors; they are individuals. Each one of them has a personality and hopes and dreams which have been cruelly shattered by those who make a profit from them. The slave drivers and traffickers buy and sell people as commodities, whose only value is in the profit they generate.

Scooped up from towns and villages to satisfy the personal or commercial interests of the slave drivers their freedom is cruelly torn from them; they are deprived of their dignity, dehumanised and thrust into a life of misery.

Sadly vulnerability to modern slavery and human trafficking is increasing. Climate change, conflict, migration, poverty lead to vulnerability to being taken into slavery and/or trafficked into exploitation.

This is a moral stain on our humanity. Modern slavery and human trafficking is the greatest human rights issue of our time. If we are going to end this degrading and inhumane activity, to give people back their freedom and the right to make choices over their own lives we need to act and we need to act now.

After I stepped down from No 10 I worked to establish the Global Commission on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking which I Chair. On 8 April at the headquarters of the United Nations (UN) in New York we launched our report with recommendations to the UN, governments, businesses and civil society organisations. The report

can be found on the Commission's website https:// www.modernslaverycommission.org

This report is a wake-up call to the world. It challenges governments, businesses and civil society to recognise the prevalence of modern slavery and human trafficking and to understand their responsibility to act. We can reduce the number of people in slavery around the world but to do so we must all play our part including the public. The report is a Call to Action to us all.

(This article and the following provided by ACE and used with permission)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Master was exceedingly gracious to university dons who visited him, but he would never reply to their questions or be drawn into their theological speculations. To his disciples, who marvelled at this, he said, "Can one talk about the ocean to a frog in a well – or about the divine to people who are restricted by their concepts?" *Anthony de Mello*

Obstacles are what you see when you take your eye off the goal. *Betty Jackson, fashion designer*

It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is the most adaptable to change. *Charles Darwin*.

The most desired gift of love is not diamonds or roses or chocolate – it is focused attention. *Rick Warren*

Barriers made of metal can turn to fluid when touched simultaneously by people on either side. *Kamila Shamsie*

Be more concerned with your character than your reputation, because your character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think you are. *John Wooden*

The ideals which have lighted my way, and time after time have given me new courage to face life cheerfully, have been kindness, beauty, and truth. *Albert Einstein (1879-1955)*

Character: The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy. *Martin Luther King Jr.*

The greatest of all miracles is that we need not be tomorrow what we are today, but we can improve if we make use of the potential implanted in us by God. *Rabbi Samuel M. Silver*

God doesn't just call people who are qualified; he calls people who are willing and then qualifies them. *Unknown.*

A rumour may not have a leg to stand on, but it will manage to get around despite this. *Unknown.*

Dear Friends

From September, I will no longer be a member of SHMC. I therefore wanted to take this opportunity to say thank you for the many acts of kindness shown to me over the years, from taxis to Clatterbridge, meals and the many cards, to flowers and well wishes. Although I have not been particularly actively involved over the past few years when I've been looking after Mark and family as well as having my own health issues to contend with, I have looked fondly upon Stockton Heath as my extended family.

I will of course still be around as we will be living locally and I have friends here. We do not as yet know what the future has in store for us but we do know God is in it and we will face it together, as we have in all things.

'Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine according to his power at work within us' *(Ephesians 3:20).*

God bless you all.

Jane C x

(I am sure we want to wish Jane and Mark all the best in the next stage of their lives, and pray God's blessing on them both.)

WALKING DAY

Some photos provided by Geoff











FLORENCE'S CHRISTENING

Florence was christened on 18 May at St Wilfrid's Church, Grappenhall. We pray God's blessing on her throughout her life.

Photo by Janet S of Florence with mum and dad, and 2 grandparents.

FESTVAL CHURCH SERVICE 5 JULY AT ST THOMAS CHURCH

(Barbara Maddock)

My choice today is a hymn I taught and did frequently with many young boys when I was a Cub Scout Leader with North-West Cheshire Scouts. Having spent nearly all my working life with children this was a job I took on most unwillingly but the fact was I couldn't get my boys into Cubs as all 4 groups in Frodsham were full – UNLESS I came in as a leader. So – no choice there but I very soon realised what a wonderful privilege it was to be involved in the scouting movement – in fact the following 15 years as Akela at First Helsby Cubs were the best years of my life.

I was always involved in any musical activity and often talked about how we could use our God-given talents not just for ourselves but maybe for the benefit of others too. Many would say they are no good at anything - but of course very one of us has a talent – whether you use your God-given gift or not is another matter but we all have something to offer – if we try.

So we sang this to thank God for the gifts he had given us and the boys marched, danced and clapped as they sang. The tune is a traditional, colourful and vibrant South African melody. The hymn is *We are Marching in the light of God*.

FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT

Don't forget that Fairtrade Fortnight is 22 September to 5 October. Watch out for fairtrade goods in shops or on-line and, if you are in Warrington, visit the Fair4All stall in Warrington Market. If you happen to be going to Chester, the shop attached to the Methodist Church there has a wide range of goods.

FAIRTRADE FOUNDATION



PENTECOST

We celebrated the birthday of the Christian Church with a party—of course! Special cakes were produced and we crafted flames.

Thanks to Hazel and everyone involved in the preparations.







Thanks to Geoff for the photos.