*the*LINK

FINAL EDITION

The quarterly magazine of Stockton Heath Methodist Church

AUGUST—OCTOBER 2026



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

ANTROBUS METHODIST CHAPEL CELEBRATES 90 YEARS OF THEIR CHURCH BUILDING











Top: decorations inside the church.

Centre: embroidered signatures from 1934.

Right: Decorated crosses by the children at St Mark's school.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Greetings everyone and welcome to the last edition of *the*LINK. I'm finding it hard to believe that it was just over 16 years ago that Kit was asking for someone to take on the church magazine and I offered. I must have been in a creative mood at the time! I have enjoyed the job but age is taking its toll more and more, and the software I rely on is being withdrawn, so now seemed like a good time to go.

Obviously, the magazine would not exist without the support of everyone who provided articles and photographs—and there have been many over the years. Thank you to you all. Thanks, too, must go to the people who printed it. In the beginning it was Bert who helped me photocopy and staple the pages together, then Emma in the Circuit office took on the job. Lately it has been Trevor who kindly took over after Emma moved away. Finally, thanks to the Pastoral Visitors who distribute it, though they will not be out of a job as there is a plan for a way to keep in touch with everyone.

I hope you enjoy looking through this final edition and don't forget that you can see all the photos in colour once the magazine is on our church's website, which should be in early August.

Now, as soon as this heat subsides, I shall be able to get on with the task of tidying my garden! Enjoy the rest of the summer everyone.



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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ACE

Member Editor 2026
Association for Church Editors

MESSAGE FROM THE REV JEREMY TRESISE

As I write this letter *(10 July)*, we are experiencing the third heatwave of the summer which has seen a record number of days this year with a temperature of more than 30 degrees. Whether you like the hot weather or not, we cannot afford to ignore the reasons for such changes to our weather patterns and address its implications.

We are about to take part in the annual Walking Day (and our thanks to those who have worked hard to secure this local church tradition), say farewell to Rev Andy Moffoot, our circuit superintendent and sing some well-loved Sunday School and School Assembly songs and choruses from our past, with our Sunday School Bangers service!

But perhaps of more significance is the visit to Stockton Heath of Fr Fadi Diab, rector of St Andrew's in Ramallah in The West Bank. Fr Diab has spoken widely around the world on the experiences of Palestinian Christians and about life more generally for those living under occupation. We are privileged to be able to welcome him in between his speaking engagements at Methodist Conference and The Synod of the Church of England no less!

Fr Diab's visit reminds us that we are but a small part of the world church, that for many life is hard and encounters with the world around them is bruising and painful and, to quote Paul, we are called to "bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ". *(Galatians 6:2).*

So yes, let us enjoy and treasure our Christian heritage, let us be prepared to give an account of the hope that lies within us, but let us also not be deaf to the cries of those who suffer for righteousness' sake and who suffer injustice and a denial of dignity.

Climate change has a disproportionately adverse effect on those who have done least to cause it to happen and the world's poor bear the brunt of extreme weather patterns. In response we are called by the Creator to live faithful and sustainable lives. This is an issue that has and will continue to have far reaching consequences on our lives and how we live them. If nothing else it causes us to raise our eyes from the immediate world around us, as we seek God's justice for all of God's children.

Jeremy

PS As we say farewell to Rev Andy Moffoot, please continue to remember Andy and Sheila in your prayers as they move to a new phase of ministry in Solihull.

Please also pray for Rev Dr James Tebbutt, our District Chair as recent ill health has caused him to curtail his current appointment in 2027.

We also say farewell to Ruth Gray as she takes up her new role as Vicar at St Helen's in Witton, Northwich. We give thanks for Ruth's ministry among us and pray for her as she begins this new phase in her ministry.

And finally, on behalf of all readers of the newsletter, I want to say a huge thank you to Julia Whitfield, who has collated, edited and distributed our church newsletter for these past 16 years. We have enjoyed countless articles, photos, news items and amusing stories in our newsletter, all thanks to Julia's hard work on our behalf.

Thank you Julia. Just think you will never need to remind the minister to submit their article for the upcoming newsletter, ever again!!!



From the archives: walking day 2015

INTRODUCING CAROLINE AND MARK, OUR NEW VICE PRESIDENT AND PRESIDENT OF CONFERENCE



The Methodist Conference elected and inducted the Revd Mark Slaney to serve as President and Caroline Stead to serve as Vice-President on Saturday, 27 June at the Methodist Conference in Telford. The induction marks the start of their year of office.

The Revd Mark Slaney currently serves as Chair of the Scotland District and the Shetland District. His work has included formative mission, study partnerships and placements with the Church of South India and the Methodist Church and Sierra Leone and Interfaith Forum support.

He preached his first sermon at the age of 15 and prior to his ordination 24 years ago, Mark served 10 years

in youth work plus jobs as a builder's mate, cleaner and van driver.

In his address to the Conference, Mark said: "I am endlessly grateful to God for our salvation and life in Christ Jesus, for that divine call on our lives that accepts us just as we are and offers us a vision of who we could become together, giving purpose and reason and making us better people and the world a better place, in partnership with the Holy Spirit. . . Throughout the designate year I have experienced a growing sense of the weight, honour and privilege that comes with the role of President. That the Church has discerned this call at this time is affirming and humbling. Be assured of my commitment in serving the Methodist people and our ecumenical, interfaith and mission partners throughout the year to come."

Caroline Stead is passionate about inclusivity and ensuring that people are welcomed and safe within the Methodist Church, and about supporting volunteers within the Church.

A local preacher in the Yorkshire West District, where she is also the Synod Secretary, Caroline is an accompanist to a minister in training and serves on the Discerning Ordained Vocation (DOV1) Committee and on Chairs' nomination panels.

A former maths teacher, Caroline was also a Lay Stationing Representative for 11 years. She has been a representative to the Conference since 2008, including 6 years on the Business Committee. In her address to the Conference, Caroline said: "I suppose that I was literally a cradle Methodist and that upbringing continued after our move, at age 7, to Yorkshire. Thank you to those who have been key on my faith journey".

"Mark and I have chosen 2 words to work with next year: Joy and Sorrow. The Christian journey is a tapestry woven with threads of both joy and sorrow."

"I am humbled that I have been called by God into the role of Vice-President. In the year ahead I am looking forward greatly to living out this calling in service to the Church that is growing, inclusive, evangelistic and justice-seeking, a Church that has given me so much up to this point in my life."

"In particular, I am excited at the prospect of being able to visit many people and places, to share my lived experience of inclusivity and to support the many volunteers who give so much to the life and mission of the Church."

COMMUNICATION IN BIBLICAL TIMES

The Bible speaks of various ways God communicates and how early believers shared teachings, such as through oral traditions, written letters, and assemblies (church gatherings). You can find principles

of divine communication and the importance of sharing God's word in verses like Colossians 3:16, Hebrews 1:1-2, and the teachings about the church as a body that shares spiritual nourishment.

Biblical principles related to sharing information in the church:

Oral tradition and written word:

The earliest Christians learned through the teachings of the apostles and the scriptures of the Old Testament.

Letters and assemblies:

Paul wrote letters to churches, such as in Corinth, to provide instruction and correction on spiritual gifts and conduct during gatherings.

The church as a body:

Ephesians 4:13-16 describes the church as growing to a "perfect man" through unity and knowledge, implying a shared understanding of truth.

Spreading the word of God:

The Holy Spirit leads believers to share the Gospel and the word of Christ.

While church magazines aren't mentioned(!), modern publications like these serve the purpose of spreading biblical teachings and nurturing faith within the community, which is a core principle in the Bible.

Alan Rickards ACE
(with the aid of AI)

IT'S NOT IN THE BIBLE

There's a number of things we think are in the Bible but aren't. Here are the facts:

"God helps those who help themselves" is probably the most often quoted phrase that is not found in the Bible.

The Bible does not say Eve sinned by eating an apple. It says that the woman ate a fruit from the forbidden tree.

All animals did not come to Noah in twos. Some came in sevens.

The Bible does not say that Jonah was swallowed by a whale. It says a large fish.

The Bible does not say that there were 3 wise men who visited the child Jesus. It only names the 3 gifts that they brought. Really there could have been any number of Magi visiting the Christ child.

Jesus did not just feed 5,000 with the loaves and fish. The Bible says that besides 5,000 men, there were women and children who also ate.

"Money is the root of all evil" is not far off the actual verse: For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.

"Charity begins at home" is not actually in the Bible. It was said by the fourteenth century British theologian, John Wycliffe.

"Cleanliness is next to Godliness", again, not in the Bible. The phrase was used by Charles Dickens in his book *Great Expectations*.

"This too shall pass". This is actually a misinterpretation of a line from "The Lament of Deor", an Old English poem.

Sally Churchus (ACE)

CHURCH CHARITIES

Stockton Heath Methodist Church supports many charities, either directly or through the Circuit. As this is the last magazine, I wanted to highlight the main ones and add 2 that we will be donating to in the coming year. These 2 were agreed on at the Annual Church Meeting and are Church Action on Poverty, and the Broomfield's Youth Project.

The first charity (below) raises money itself from the knitting produced.

LOVING HEARTS AND HANDS KNITTING GROUP

In January this year we began our sixteenth year of knitting and nattering. We have around 20 people at our twice-monthly meetings and remain passionate and enthusiastic about our knitting. We continue to knit and crochet for the Neo-Natal Unit at Warrington Hospital and produce hand puppets and teddies for the children's ward. We take bags of baby, children and adult knits to the Family Hubs in Dallam and Great Sankey where support for families is given. Active Hope have received lots of knitted teddy bears, which they hand out to the children on activity days.

For many years now, we have regularly sent a large box of knitting to Knit for Peace, an organisation in London, which distributes knitting from around 300 knitting groups to hospitals, women's refuges, refugee drop-in centres, prisons, community groups, hospices and to developing countries.

In 2018 we decided we would see if we could sell some of our knitting. We did, and it enabled us to start up a Charity Fund so that we could donate money directly to charity organisations in Warrington. We have come a long way since 2018 and our recent Spring Sale took our total sales since we started, to just over £13,000. Many of our friends at church support our sales and we are truly thankful for your custom. We enjoy meeting up; it's a chance to get together, to knit and chat with some people we don't usually see other than at the knitting group. The amount of knitting that comes in at our meetings is amazing. We just love it….so I will leave you there… my knitting is calling. *Chris*

ACTIVE HOPE

Over the last 15 or so years many members of our Church have helped make a positive impact

in the lives of many children from all sorts of backgrounds. It's important that we continue to help Dan Curtis and his Active Hope staff and volunteers with their expanding work in our local area.

Several members of our Church continue to support Active Hope in a very practical way. Chris Ardern, Alan Rogers, Fiona Morton and Ann Eggboro have all helped with different events. The tasks included praying, fundraising, driving minibuses, preparing and cooking food, helping with activities such as exploring the Dingle and catering at Delamere.

Chris Ardern led some fundraising which included a very successful coffee morning at Church and enough was collected to buy a dishwasher for the Smile Centre in Orford, where the charity is based. This will be very useful on the days when they have 30 plus staff to cater for.

We are being asked if we can support with Adventure Academies 2026/27:

Monday 26 - Wednesday 28 October 2026
Monday 15 - Wednesday 17 February 2027
Residential - Wednesday 31 March - Friday 2 April 2027

Would you be able to support on some of these dates or indeed other events in school time? If so let Lynsey in the Active Hope office know office@activehope.org.uk, and Geoff Clarke.

ALL WE CAN

The Problem: Power and resources held in the wrong hands are holding local organisations and communities back. In communities where development work happens, communities are often trapped in cycles of poverty and enduring inequality, reduced agency, and stifled opportunities.

The Solution: We offer flexible, unrestricted support to strengthen local organisations so that they, along with their communities, can build solutions that last far beyond short-term fixes.

We strive for a world where every community has the power, dignity, and resources to lead their own future, creating just societies.

CHURCH ACTION ON POVERTY

This is a Christian social justice charity and is one of the charities our recent Annual Church Meeting adopted for the coming year.

Church Action on Poverty works with people in poverty, churches of all denominations, community groups and others, to identify the causes of poverty and address them together. Gospel values of justice and compassion are put into practice, inspired by the Christian call to challenge unjust structures. The charity is involved in social

action, political engagement, prayer and theology.

BROOMFIELD'S YOUTH PROJECT (BYP)

This is a multi-award-winning voluntary Christian youth work partnership that seeks to be a signpost and support for young people. It is also another of the charities our church agreed to support for the coming year.

Being part of the local community, and working in partnership with multiple agencies, BYP aims to signpost and support any 13 - 17-year-olds in our local community who want help with emotional and mental health needs.

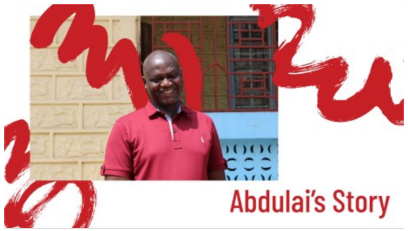
The 'Shack' youth centre was built to allow BYP to develop beyond their original Friday night intervention work by creating a space where deeper relationships can encourage change. The focus now is around supporting and leading Bridgewater High with its work in the areas of mental and emotional wellbeing.

Since BYP's inception in November 2009 the local Police statistics have shown a consistent reduction in anti-social behaviour in the area.

BYP has a very good website if you want to know more about what they are doing.

Thank you to everyone who continues to support our charities either by being involved or by donating.

ALL WE CAN UPDATE FROM SIERRA LEONE



I am the Founder and Executive Director of Pikin-to-Pikin Movement, a national organisation established in 1994 and registered as an NGO in 1998.

The organisation was established during the war years in Sierra Leone. When the war reached Freetown, many children were going missing, so we volunteered to come and try to help find them. We had a centre where we took the children so we could try and reunite them with their families. Those who could not be reunited with their family were cared for at the centre. That's how we started!

Fast forward to recent years. We came across All We Can through an advertisement stating that they wanted development partners in Sierra Leone. We applied for the partnership; the application process was rigorous. They came to assess the organisation, and we were selected to be one of their Sierra Leonean partners!

This process is helpful because it allows us to look inwards. What can we as an organisation do to strengthen ourselves? If we want to help more communities, we need to be strong as an organisation. We want to reach the unreachable. That's what we are considering as we expand to more communities and more schools.

In terms of our work with communities, we have 4 thematic areas: education, child protection, water sanitation, and health and nutrition. These 4 themes intersect because we want the schools to be safe so that the children can go to school, have access to education, access to clean water and toilet facilities, and also be protected from harm and abuse.

One of our biggest challenges is the demand from communities. We get a lot of requests from schools because of the types of programmes we run. They're expecting us to provide what we have for other schools. But we try and tailor-make our programmes so they work for each school.

What we really like about our partnership with All We Can is that we design our programmes and we say what we want to do. It's not for All We Can to tell us what we have to do. For them, they know that we are the ones who sit with the community and listen to them. We submit our activities based on the communities we support, and All We Can is ready to support us!



My name is Giorgiana, and I am a teacher.

My favourite thing about being a teacher, what I enjoy the most, is that I'm able to teach my young people to be good role models in this country.

With Pikin-to-Pikin, I run a study group for students at this school. Without the class, some of the children just weren't able to achieve their potential. Many of them were not doing well in class. It is because, for so many of them, as soon as they go home, they don't have time to study. But with the help of this class, if they are given an assignment to do, they will come and say, 'Aunty! We have an assignment in class. Can you help us understand?' And so we spend our time going over it so that they can understand and do well in their classes.

This group is important because, at first, some of them couldn't write well. But with the help of the regular study group, they have improved! They say to me, 'Aunty! I'm going to come first in our examinations!' and I get to encourage them.

We have really seen the impact! These children who were at the bottom of their class are now at the top!

Word has spread about the study group; as a result, some of the parents come to me, and they say, 'Aunty! My child tells me there is a study group after class. Can they come along?' I tell them yes, and the children join us. When the parents see that their child is progressing in school, they are very happy about it!

As well as helping the students with their given assignments, I also talk about the things that will help them to be good role models. I have taught them about the impacts of violence and drug abuse. I have also taught them about the importance of hygiene and how they must respect and appreciate each other. There are many things we have been able to cover in these sessions!

ANTROBUS METHODIST CHAPEL 1936 TO 2026

What a fabulous weekend we had at the Methodist Chapel at the beginning of June. We had 3 days of events – every afternoon was open for tea and cake and to view the displays and learn a bit of our history. It turned out to be a very entertaining concert on the Saturday evening and a wonderful Songs of Praise Service on the Sunday evening to round it off. We had a lovely time meeting old friends and new, as folks dropped in to have a look around.

So many friends helped us to prepare over the weekend, and we would like to say a huge thank you to all who supported us in anyway – there were cake makers, refreshment servers, organists, other musicians and entertainers; not to mention the amazing creative displays in the windows to the stunning flower arrangements on the altar and in the entrance porches. A particular thank you is also due to the Antrobus St Mark's School children who had made individual brightly decorated crosses from which we were able to create a stunning display.

Overall, it was a wonderfully uplifting experience and an appropriate way to celebrate our history and remember all the folks who paved the way for us.

Ann B, Antrobus

(*See Ann's photos on front cover and page 2)*

BITS AND PIECES

Gill's annual plant and book sale in May raised £534.60 for Amnesty International. Thanks to everyone who supported the event.

I am sure everyone who attended the last play, The Whitby Rebels, had a wonderful time. It was well performed and the set designers had managed to create a rather

difficult set of scenery. Well done to everyone concerned.

Tim Baker will be joining us again to lead worship on 27 September.

Harvest weekend is 10-11 October.

And now, my very last selection of thoughts and jokes, courtesy of ACE.

One person with a steadfast belief is worth more than a force of 99 who only have an interest.

The only place where success comes before work is in the dictionary.

Success is 5% inspiration, 95% perspiration and 2% attention to detail!

Some people are born to be great; some achieve greatness; some just grate.

The most important part of a prayer is the 15 minutes after I have said it. *(George Muller)*

No matter how far you have gone down the wrong road, turn back. *(Turkish proverb)*

It may not be right to assume that the will of the majority is the will of God.

"Daddy, I want to ask you a question", said little Bobby after his first day at Sunday school.
"Yes, Bobby, what is it?"

"The teacher was reading the Bible to us – all about the children of Israel building the Temple, the children of Israel crossing the Red Sea, the children of Israel making sacrifices. Didn't the grown-ups do anything?"

What kind of motor vehicles are in the Bible?

- Jehovah drove Adam and Eve out of the Garden in a Fury.
- David's Triumph was heard throughout the land.
- Honda: because the apostles were all in one Accord.
- Volkswagen Beetle: 2 Cor. 4:8 "We are pressed in every way, but not cramped beyond movement".

When you have more than you need, build a longer table, not a higher fence. *Tamlin Tomita, American actress.*

God's love is like an ocean; you can see its beginning but not its end. *Rick Warren.*

The pessimist complains about the wind
The optimist expects it to change
The realist adjusts the sails.
Unknown.

One Sunday after the morning service the vicar asked his verger, "Do you think I should put more fire into my sermons?" The verger replied, "In my opinion, vicar, you should put more sermons into your fire."

SUNDAY SCHOOL BANGERS

One day Jeremy had an idea. He discussed it with Hazel and their collaboration brought about Sunday School Bangers which was performed on Sunday evening, 12 July. The church congregation became pupils in Mrs Bradley's class with Mrs Hughes playing the "piano" for the singing in morning assembly! Jeremy played the part of the pupil who was always late and who constantly messed around in class so was repeatedly told off by Mrs Bradley.

The church was full as we were joined by friends from other churches. We sang hymns, songs and choruses from decades ago and even did the actions to some of them. At the end there were choc ices, as well as cake, and I think a good time was had by all.

My thanks to Lis for providing the photos.





Top left: Mrs Bradley with her 'difficult' pupil.
Top right: Jeremy in trouble again!
Below: Jeremy leading the actions to one of the songs.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

For the final time I have chosen some photos from back copies of the magazine. So much has happened over the years and time has passed very quickly.



In 2015 Sue and Mike were preparing for their wedding. Where have those 11 years gone?



The stewards organised a social event in 2016—bowls in Alexandra Park. I think it was a bit wet!

The next photo is from a holiday club in 2016. Some of those children are probably finishing secondary school this year.





Sam and Naomi were married in 2017.



The Big Ride for Palestine stopped off for refreshments and a bit of a rest in 2019.

In 2018 Sarah was preparing to run another marathon, this time in Norway. Here she is resting before the running began. There is something about the way the photographer has caught Sarah, a lonely figure in a vast landscape. I love it.



And lastly. Do you remember all the services we had to share on Zoom? This one was being led by Tim Baker in 2020.

