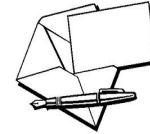




**St. John's Methodist Church
Whitchurch**

**July/August 2024
Newsletter**

Message from the Manse



Hello friends,

By the time you read this perhaps it's all over, but as I write this, it is currently election season and I'm sure I'm not the only one keeping an eye on the different policies, campaigns and intentions/promise that are being made. I do of course maintain that it's not good form at all to declare party affiliations as I preach or pastor to our community, but I must confess that I can't help but smile and giggle every time someone says "There should be no politics from the pulpit!".

At its heart, Christianity is deeply political and rightly so! Whilst its political it is NOT Party Political. There's no Methodist Church line on which party or candidates' people should vote for. But as a church born out of a heart for social justice, we are deeply political nonetheless, as we are concerned with seeing the world change for the better, in every way possible.

Election season is a time when we're all (I hope) thinking more acutely about the way our government spends money on different things, giving attention to different groups of people. At all times, I hope Christians are thinking about how time, attention and money can be focussed on the people that need it most.

Oscar Romero, a priest and later Archbishop in San Salvador, who was assassinated for his

outspoken politics in favour of the poor, was canonised as a Saint in the Roman Catholic church in 2018. He's well known for standing firm to the teaching of 'preferential option for the poor', which is a part of Catholic social teaching but also a key emphasis in Methodism.

In this teaching, we understand that the Bible explicitly shows that there is preference given to the well-being of the poor and the powerless and it's with that in mind that we should all read the manifestos and policies for the parties and candidates hoping for our votes at the election. I often read them, wondering what differences the different ideas and ideologies will make to those who are poorest and most vulnerable in society, and indeed around the world.

In Whitchurch we can forget that there are many in our country and world who are struggling, and financially are finding it hard to even provide the basic needs. A conversation with a Food Bank volunteer sadly reminds us of the ever-increasing need of the food bank. The food bank is a necessary part of our community now; it's no longer a stop gap, it's a vital need. Often, we think of the food bank around winter time, and especially at Christmas. But in the summertime, we often have our minds on other things like holidays, trips to the seaside, ice cream and long summer evenings; it's easy to forget about the needs of others and to focus on our own.

In the Bible, Jesus reminds us often of our need to shift perspective, to see first from the point of view of someone less fortunate than ourselves, less well represented, less well able to speak up. I think if we all did this, the world could look quite different indeed.

I encourage us in these months ahead (both pre- and post-election) to see where there needs to be change for those who are the least and lost in our community. So that they are not just looked after, but are treated as equals, precious in God's sight and in the eyes of our government too. Whatever the outcomes, may we always be deeply political voices, prophetic voices, which speak of the possibility of a different kind of world.

With blessings

Rev Donna

Churches Together

The AGM of Churches Together is set for July 2nd at 7pm in the Beacon Centre. All are invited.

This is an opportunity to have fellowship with our local Christian friends and after the short amount of business there will be a presentation and discussion about *Climate Change*: what does it mean for Christians, and what can we do about it.

We are pleased to welcome Dr Isabel Carter from south Shropshire, who has wide experience of working with charities and churches on this issue. Please come along if you can.

STEWARD'S LETTER



Hello Friends,

We all seem to be so busy these days rushing to keep up with this and that and the time and seasons just fly by. I'm sure time goes faster as we get older! Last Friday evening I was thinking about the weekend ahead. I had planned to make an apple pie early in the morning for the quiz that evening at the bowling club; I also had to finish Pew News on Saturday morning and Bob had asked me if I could cut his hair. I was thinking could I realistically sing with Whitchurch Singers between 10.30 and 11am AND get my sewing things together and open the church for 12 for Sewing Bee?

I made a decision and sent a message to say that I wouldn't be able to sing. I cut Bob's hair, I made my pie and finished Pew News. Then I had time. I made a cup of coffee and sat in the conservatory and enjoyed the peace of the morning. I have a little pebble on my window ledge and it says, 'Be still' on one side and, 'and know that I am God' on the other. I did just that and I felt so much better.

This week, during the run up to the Summer Fayre with Strawberry Teas, I'm thinking very much of my dear friend Sue. This time last year we were enjoying the preparations together and she was preparing her face painting. I think of Sue a lot, in fundraising, at Sewing Bee, and talking to the Sewing Bee ladies

about the Fashion Show we plan in October. The Fashion Show was very much Sue's 'thing' and she was our compere as we strutted our stuff up the catwalk (or aisle)!

However, everything is coming together nicely for the Summer Fayre with Strawberry Teas and I'm looking forward to another successful event.

I hope you all enjoy July and August and get the best out of the summer season whatever you do. I know Monty Don always encourages us to sit and enjoy our gardens, smell the flowers and take time to observe and enjoy them. I hope you find some regular time to 'be still and know that He is God' this summer.

Amen

Dot Charlesworth

Circuit News

Deacon Jill Henderson is moving on from our Circuit in August and taking up a new appointment from September 2024. She has covered services and Church Council Meetings for us at St John's while our ministers have been on Sabbatical and will be greatly missed.

Report from Annual Church Meeting 2024
Sunday 9 th June.

Election of Stewards:

The current stewards agreed to continue and were re-elected unanimously:-

Andrew Fawcett
Dorothy Charlesworth
Mike Nimmo
Hazel Nimmo

Election of people in offices

The current officers agreed to continue and were re-elected unanimously.

Briony Myles-Hook. – Treasurer

Brenda Aumeer – Safeguarding Officer

Hazel Nimmo - Pastoral Roll

Brenda Aumeer - Communion Steward

Chris Crowther Rep to Churches Together

Chris Crowther – Rep to Circuit Meeting

Following the sad death of our Church Secretary, Sue Acty, Hazel Nimmo kindly volunteered to carry out this office for one year and was elected unanimously.

Church Council Secretary - Hazel Nimmo

Note: Briony attends the Churches Together Meetings as Rep for Christian Aid and she

attends the Circuit meeting as a Circuit Steward. Three more people can attend Circuit Meetings to represent St Johns so if you are interested please speak to Briony.

Election of Representatives to Church Council

Michael Mulliner and Peter Shingler have stepped

down as representatives to Church Council and were thanked for their service.

The following representatives agreed to continue and were re-elected unanimously.

Elaine Gollins

Sarah Lunt

Peter Langley

Reports for Church AGM 2024 (circulated before the meeting)

No comments were received in advance of the meeting and all reports were accepted.

Please contact Hazel Nimmo if you would like a copy.

Chair Yoga Classes

If anyone would like to join the Chair Yoga Classes at St John's they are on Thursdays at 10.30am

From *The Months* by Sara Coleridge:

Hot July brings cooling showers,
Apricots and gillyflowers.
August brings the sheaves of corn,
Then the harvest home is born

***An alternative version of Psalm 23:
By Toki Miyashina***

The Lord is my shepherd—I shall not rush—He makes me stop for quiet intervals.

He provides me with images of stillness which restore my serenity.

He leads me in ways of efficiency through calmness of mind and his guidance is peace.

Even though I have a great many things to accomplish each day, I will not fret, for his presence is here. His kindness now, his all-importance, will keep me in balance.

He prepares refreshment and renewal in the midst of activity.

By anointing my mind with his oils of tranquillity, my cup of joyous energy overflows.

Truly harmony and effectiveness shall be the fruits of my hours, for I shall work in the peace of my Lord and dwell in his house for ever.

One cold February day a snail started climbing an apple tree. As he inched slowly upward, a worm stuck his head from a crevice in the bark to offer some advice. “You’re wasting your energy. There isn’t a single apple up there!” The snail kept up his slow climb. “There will be when I get there,” he said!

Shropshire Historic Churches Trust Ride & Stride Event

Once again, we have registered St John's with the SHCT fund raising event, **Ride & Stride** which this year takes place on **Saturday 14th September**, as part of Heritage Weekend.

This is a 3-pronged event.

- 1.) The church opens to visitors from 10am to 6pm with people manning it through the day. Visitors will come from across the county (and neighbouring ones) either walking, cycling, or riding horses **or in a car**, to as many churches/chapels as they can manage.
- 2.) Members of the church can Ride or Stride between as many churches/chapels as they are able in the time.
- 3.) Participants (Riders, Striders and church sitters etc.) obtain as much sponsorship as possible. It is possible to Gift Aid which is a valued extra.

So, if you would like a morning or afternoon driving round beautiful Shropshire countryside, and raising funds from sponsorship at the same time, then this is your chance. After the event, all the Sponsor money is collected up and sent to the SHCT. The treasurer will then send 50% back to the nominated church/chapel ie. St. John's.

Anyone who is interested in being sponsored for walking or riding (a bike, a horse or in a car) round as many open churches/chapels as they can, please ask Chris Crowther for more information either at church or on 667282.

You can also access information on which Churches are open by going on the Shropshire Historic Churches website and following the link.

More details in Pew News nearer the time.

John Newton

John Newton was a slave trader who was converted to Christianity and became the vicar of Olney in Buckinghamshire.

One day a parishioner asked him what he hoped to find in Heaven.

“If I ever reach Heaven,” he replied, “I expect to find three wonders. First, to meet some people I had not thought to see there; secondly, to miss some I had expected to see there, and lastly, the greatest wonder of all, to find myself there!”

John Newton wrote many hymns, the most famous of which is “Amazing Grace”.

Zoom Services

The next Zoom services will be on Sundays - 21st July, 18th August, 22nd September, 20th October and 17th November all at 4pm. These services are now also listed on our Circuit Plan. Everyone is welcome for a short service and time of fellowship.

Contact Avril for the link.

Proverb:

Courage is fear that has said its prayers.

BBT @ St. John's

Bumps, Babies and Toddlers provides a friendly welcome to children and their carers. Between 15 and 20 attend each week for craft, toys and coffee with singing, stories and prayers in the church when it's warm enough! If you would like to help or just want to come and say hello, please speak to someone on the rota.

BBT Rota for July

Date /Leader	Open up	Gen & Craft	Kitch- en
1st Briony	Mike	Elaine	Chris
8th Kathryn	Chris	Dot/Brenda	Sarah
15th Kathryn	Mike	Dot/Chris	Hazel

There will be no BBT over the summer holidays but we will let you know of any activities taking place on the Whatsapp group **BBT@ST John's**

Have a great summer and we look forward to seeing you on Monday 9th September.

Preachers for July

7th LA
14th Mrs Pat Maidment
21st Hub Service @Brown Knowl
28th Dr Geoff Dickinson

Stewards for July

7th Andrew Fawcett
14th Mike Nimmo
21st Dot Charlesworth
28th Hazel Nimmo

Sound for July

7th Andrew
14th Mike Nimmo
21st Hub service @Brown Knowl
28th Sarah Lunt

Tea & Coffee Rota for July

7th Brenda Aumeer & Sarah Lunt
14th Hazel & Mike Nimmo
21st Briony Myles Hook & Linda
Weston
28th Chris Crowther & Elaine Gollins



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

Please also take the tea towels and towel home, wash and return. If the dates above are not convenient, please let me know.

Hazel

Preachers for August

4th Graham Dimelow
11th LA
18st Mrs Sue Tyson
25th Rev Jenny Arthurs

Stewards for August

4th Andrew Fawcett
11th Dot Charlesworth
18st Mike Nimmo
25th Hazel Nimmo

Sound for August

4th Andrew Fawcett
11th Mike Nimmo
18st Sarah Lunt
25th Brian Acty

Tea & Coffee Rota for August

4th Dot C. & Bronwen
11th Elizabeth & Pete
18th Hazel & Linda Jenkins
25th Avril & Nancy



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

Please also take the tea towels and towel home, wash and return. If the dates above are not convenient, please let me know either by email (hazel@heritagewalk.co.uk) or by telephone (01948 667857)

During a long life I have proved that not one kind word ever spoken, not one kind deed ever done, but sooner or later returned to bless the giver and become a chain binding ever with golden threads to the throne of God.

Anon

Reporting scams—the basics—from Age UK

If you suspicious about...

...a call — hang up.

...an email— forward it to:- report@phishing.gov.uk

...a text message forward it to 7726, which is free of charge.

An excerpt from *The Cottage Book* (*the undiscovered country diary of an Edwardian Statesman Sir Edward Grey. He was a Liberal MP for 30 years and GBs longest serving Foreign Secretary*).

July 3rd 1900 It rains every day, so much that we do mind a little, though we don't complain because it is so much better than drought. Today I am going to London between showers, but we had two minutes of sun this morning and I stood in it and really felt it; it seemed quite strange. Sweet-briar is now well out. The cirl buntings are all right and I have several watchings of them. The goldfinches are feeding their young too, but they feed at long intervals, they bring them something invisible in their beaks and they take a long time to administer it to their young. Our rose-buds are struggling into flower one by one, but they are very sodden and humble.

(Editors note: I feel this could have been written this year!)

PRAYER REQUESTS



Pray for those known to us who are ill, housebound, in care, lonely, bereaved or in any other kind of need.

St John's

Pray that we can find the right way forward so that we can continue the community work that has developed over the last few years. Pray that our church grows spiritually. Pray for Stephen and Emma who are planning to get married at St. John's soon.

Our Town

Pray for the school children as they come to the end of a school year some finishing or having completed exams. Let it be a time of physical and mental renewal for them.

Our Nation

Pray for wisdom for our (new?) leaders as they make decisions on our behalf in the current world-wide issues. Help them to be respectful of one another even if they disagree with policies.

Our World

Pray for the people of Ukraine, Israel/Palestine and the Sudan. Give them hope of life returning to some kind of normality in the coming months.

Remember to pray for other areas of the world which are suffering from war, drought, flooding and persecution

Dates for your Diary

July

Mon 1st 11.30am Funeral of Audrey Darlington

Tues 2nd 7pm Churches Together AGM Watergate
Centre

Sat. 13th Brown Knowl Teas 2-4pm £10

Sun 21st 4pm Zoom service

Sat. 27th Recycled Sewing Bee

August

Sat. 10th Brown Knowl Teas 2-4pm £10

Sun 18th 4pm Zoom service

Sat. 31st Recycled Sewing Bee

Regular Activities

Mon. 1st, 8th, & 15th July 9.30—11.30am BBT

Mondays 12—4.00pm MORE

Thursdays 1-4pm MORE

On Fridays from 10.15—11.15am a Prayer meeting is held at Elizabeth Jennings' house, 10 Queens Road.

Other activities during the week held in our church: -

Mondays 7-8.30pm Whitchurch Choir

Tuesdays 9.45-11.30am Yoga

Wednesdays 12 noon—2.30pm Meeting

Thursdays: 10am—12.30pm Art Group



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Taxi! for July & August

Taxi service **may be** available. Phone either
Hazel **OR**

Pete before 9.30am and if they are able to one of them
will give bring you to church.

September 2024 Newsletter

Please let Dot Charlesworth have all your submissions for the next Newsletter by 21st August.

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