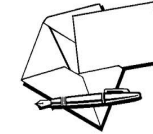


Newsletter



St. John's Methodist Church
Whitchurch
February 2025

Message from the Manse



February 2025

Hello friends,

At the end of this month, I will be going off on sabbatical for three months. Sabbaticals are a required part of a minister's duty. They can be extremely beneficial, both for the minister and for the health of the wider church and can significantly enhance the ministry of the whole people of God.

A sabbatical is taken every 7 years in ministry, and it has to be stressed that this is not a period of extended holiday. It is a time for further reflection and study to be done; a time for rest and a time for the minister to focus on their spiritual health and relationship with God. The aim of the sabbatical is to enable the minister to come back into the church context refreshed and with a renewed sense of God's calling and with something to enhance the worshipping and spiritual life of the church moving forward.

I also think that a sabbatical is time for the local church to reflect and question their spiritual journey and where they hear God's voice calling them. For the local church it also comes with extra responsibilities to cover and perhaps a different way of working, and working alongside other ministers who have come to support the church whilst their minister is away. This can be a challenging but hopefully a positive experience. I certainly will be looking forward to coming back to hearing everything you have learnt, experienced and been challenged by whilst I was away.

This sabbatical is my first, but it was also delayed by a year due to the death of my dad. Before dad died, we had spent quite a lot of time talking together about what I was going to do on my sabbatical. I have always been comforted and supported in my faith by my family, and one of the biggest influences was my grandfather, who was a very devoted Catholic. Yet he was also very encouraging of us having a wide view of faith and Christianity; he really did have an ecumenical heart. Grandad died when I was 15, and at that point being a minister was not what I wanted to do.

Cont. overleaf

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I do often wonder what he would have thought. In more recent years, I have been given some things that I now cherish; rosary beads which were my great grandmothers which my grandad also used; and A Simple Prayer Book for Catholics which was my dad's. Both of these items are symbols of a faith that has been lived out.

I have always been proud of my Irish heritage, and been intrigued by the faith my grandad had. I also loved listening to the folk tales as a child from the Celtic Irish tradition. So, I knew Ireland was where I wanted to spend some of my sabbatical time.

Just a few weeks before Dad died, he had ordered a large map of Ireland and we were going to sit down and mark out together where we were going to explore. Dad knew places that were significant to my family history and we were going to visit places he went to as a child.

Dad loved planning anything like this, and would have loved the whole adventure that we would have gone on; telling me stories of my family and Irish history; hunting out the best places to enjoy a proper Irish breakfast; making sure we made the most of time and calculating the driving distances as well as working out how much sausage and black pudding we could bring back and fit in the freezer. Sadly, we never got the chance to have those conversations and enjoy that time together. Whilst I know some of the places, I don't know them all, so it feels bitter sweet in many ways but together my mom and I have planned out a route, and we know at least now we won't be hurried along by dad in the shops!

We are planning on visiting a number of Celtic worship sites, the giants causeway, the Irish Rural Museum, the Ring of Kerry, Waterford, Limerick, St Patricks Cathedral, and going to see the Book of Kells to name just a few places. We start off in Belfast and work around Ireland, ending up with family in Dublin.

Cont. overleaf

Cont.,

Also, during my sabbatical, I will be spending some time sewing at my machine. I'm hoping to make a stole which I can use in worship and reflect some of the Celtic artwork I will experience. On my trip to Ireland, I hope to pick up some different ways of worship and different styles too, which I hope to share with you in church on my return.

At Easter, as a family we are going to Northumbria and spending Easter on Holy Island, which I think will be a truly moving experience. And then before we know it, I will be coming back.

The church stewards will have information of people to contact if you need a minister during this time, so please do speak to them if you need anyone.

On Sunday 23rd February at 3pm at St Johns Methodist Church, you are all invited to come along for a service of prayer, praise and worship to mark the beginning of my sabbatical. There will be refreshments served. We are asking each church to bring some food to share, someone from St Johns will be in contact to let you know what to bring along.

So, as we head off soon on our adventures, I leave you with the words of the Irish blessing,

May the road rise up to meet you
May the wind be always at your back
May the sunshine always warm your face
The rain fall softly upon your fields
And until we meet again
May God hold you in the palm of his hand

With blessings Rev Donna

Stewards Letter for February

Dear Friends,

As I'm writing this I'm struggling with a cold and cough and I feel like I've been 'kept in' for most of January, firstly by the icy weather making pavements and roads treacherous, and secondly by my cold as I don't want to be spreading any germs! I'm hoping to get out and about more in February, weather and health permitting, and I'm hoping to spot some early spring flowers. The snow drops are first aren't they? Or are they? If you spot any please let me know.

I've been busy planning another year of fundraising for St. Johns in 2025 and I'm looking forward to our first Jumble Sale of the year on Saturday 1st February. You'll find more about fundraising on page 9.

Kindness

The word kindness has been chosen as the Children's Word of the Year following a survey by Oxford University Press and the survey was taken of over six thousand children over the U.K. I don't know about you but I find that quite reassuring in all that is going on in our world at the moment. I took time to look up kind and kindness in my chambers dictionary;

Kind: disposed to do good to others, benevolent, helpful and agreeable.

Kindness: the quality or fact of being kind.

I hope we can all practice a little more kindness in all our relationships this year and I know I will certainly be trying.

Dot Charlesworth

Preachers for February

Feb. 2nd—Rev. Helen Stubbs H.C.

Feb. 9th—Rev. Donna Broadbent-Kelly

Feb 16th—Mr. Graham Dimelow

Feb. 23rd—Rev. Donna Broadbent-Kelly

Stewards Rota for February

Feb. 2nd—Andrew

Feb. 9th—Dot

Feb 16th—Hazel

Feb. 23rd—Mike

Tea & Coffee for February / March



Feb. 2nd—Elizabeth & Pete
Feb. 9th—Hazel & Mike
Feb. 16th—Avril & Nancy
Feb. 23rd—Brenda & Sarah

March 2nd—Briony & Linda Weston
March 9th—Chris & Elaine
March 16th—Hazel & Linda Jenkins
March 23rd—Dot & Bronwen
March 30th— Elizabeth & Pete

If the date you have been allocated doesn't suit please arrange to "swop" with someone.

Thank you - Hazel.

Jumble Sale

Our next Jumble Sale is on 1st February from 10am-12. We'll have a raffle, Cake Stall, Bric-a-Brac and Refreshments, and jumble of course.

If you can donate anything we'd be most grateful, and if you're not helping please come along and support us.

Dot

All the Date for February

Saturday Feb. 1st : Jumble Sale 10am-12

Sunday 9th February 4pm. Zoom Service. Please speak to Avril if you would like to attend.

Tuesday 11th February. Churches together in Whitchurch. Please speak to Chris or Elaine if you would like to attend.

Wednesday 12th February. Circuit meeting 7pm on Zoom. Please speak to Briony, Chris or Elaine if you would like to attend.

February 23rd. Joint Service before Rev. Donna goes on Sabbatical. All offers of refreshments after the service gratefully accepted.

Property Matters

(1) You may have noticed the damage caused by Storm Darragh when the finial and some ridge tiles blew down from the church apse at the beginning of December. This caused damage to several roof tiles, a section of guttering and some stone work and there is now water leaking into the vestry when it rains. We have obtained

a quote from Emertons Roofing to repair the damage and work will be carried out as soon as Methodist Insurance have approved our claim.

(2) St John's Methodist Church and adjoining church hall have been added to Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register (HARR) following an assessment site visit on 2nd January 2025. They will appear on the (on-line) register when it is published in late 2025. The entry will read –

'Methodist Church C19. Late C13, early C14 Gothic style. 4-bay nave with 3-bay north aisle and south porch, chancel, north and south transepts, organ chamber to southeast, north-west steeple, and vestry. Church hall adjoins to the north-east. Sneaked rock-faced yellow/ brown sandstone with ashlar dressings. Roof coverings require urgent repair/replacement to protect interior plasterwork and timbers below. Rainwater goods and drainage are inadequate, with high-level masonry showing signs of staining. The west tower is in a poor state, with crumbling stone and falling masonry. Urgent repairs are required, subject to availability of funding by the Church.'

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Cont.,

Historic England have said that Inclusion on the Register is not a criticism of those responsible for the building. Rather, it is an indication that those who are caring for an important part of the country's heritage are facing significant challenges, which may require more resources than they can find locally. The aim of the Register is to keep attention focused on these buildings, to act as a working tool to help define the scale of the problem, and to prioritise action by Historic England, local authorities, dioceses, funding bodies and others who can play a part in making these irreplaceable buildings safe and sustainable for future generations.

Churches Together

This year's Churches together in Whitchurch service for the Week of Christian Unity was hosted by St John's on 23 rd January. Worship was lead by Rev Donna who took the theme of Jesus' question to Martha & quote Do you believe this?

We shared the Nicene Creed which was first adopted 1700 years ago in 325AD and is the shared statement of faith by Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Methodists and other major protestant churches. It was good to meet with members of St Alkmunds, St George's and Beacon as we prayed that we would continue to work together to share God's love in our local community.

BBT@St Johns



Please join us at Bumps, Babies & Toddlers from 9.30-11.30am for craft, toys, singing, stories, coffee & chat. A children's clothing hub is also available so come and find some new outfits for your growing children. We are keen for more people to join our rota of helpers so if you would like to help or just want to come and say hello, please speak to someone on the rota.

The Rota for February is below. :

	Leader	Open- ing up	General & Craft	Kitchen
3rd Feb	Kathryn	Briony	Brenda & Elaine	Sarah
10th Feb	Kathryn	Briony	Chris & Dot	Elaine
17th Feb	<i>Half Term</i>			
24th Feb	Kathryn	Mike	Dot & Brenda	Hazel

Hope Journey for Easter

Following the success of the Hope Journey in December when children from year 3 at Whitchurch Junior Academy came to St. Johns to learn more about the Christmas Story, Kathryn is planning a **Hope Journey about the Easter Story** for a group of Year 4 children at the end of term. The provisional date is **Friday 4th April**. If you are interested in being involved by telling the Easter Story, serving refreshments, helping with a craft or welcoming children and guiding them around our church, please speak to someone on the BBT Rota to find out more



Taxi

For anyone requiring a lift to church please contact either Pete Shingler or Hazel and if they are able to one of them will bring you to church.

March Newsletter

Please let Mike Nimmo have all your submissions for the next Newsletter by Friday 21st February

Fundraising 2025

We have quite a regular pattern of events throughout the year that have proved both popular and successful so I'm hoping we can follow through with our regular events perhaps with some optional extras?

We have some dates in the diary but some yet to be arranged. My thoughts and plans are below Please let me know what you think and if you can help in any way.

Saturday Feb 1st Jumble Sale 10am-12

Saturday March 1st: Afternoon tea and singalong? We've previously had Valentines Afternoon Tea with a quiz but the word Valentine can sometimes put people off and when we had a singalong at the Christmas Fayre it seemed to go ok. Also singing has uplifting health benefits.

April : Spring Quiz and Fish & Chip Supper (date dependant on availability of Quiz Master?)

April: Brass Band Concert with the Town Band: This was held in April last year and a huge success. I will contact both Peter Williams and the Band and see if we can repeat the concert this April.

Cont.,

May: Our very popular Spring Concerts. We held them on Friday at midday last year and the dates this year are, 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23d and 30th. If we can do 5 that would be great. I know Whitchurch Singers are very keen to do one of the dates. Watch this space.

June: perhaps a Summer Jumble Sale?

July: Strawberry Fayre

August/September—I thought we might have a break in August and September.

October: Blackberry Fair and Harvest. The recycled Fashion Show was successful last year but the Art Exhibition was a lot of work and not as successful for various reasons. I think we need to rethink our Blackerry Fair event but keep the Fashion Show.

November: Quiz & Fish & Chip Supper

November: Jumble Sale ?

December: Christmas Fayre

Dot Charlesworth



The Drawing Room Group

We resume on Thursday 4th September after the summer break. We meet every Thursday morning at St. John's Methodist Church 10am to 12.30pm.

If you already enjoy drawing or if you want to learn please come and join us. Materials are provided if you have none.

Just come and try it the first session is free!

It's the best couple of hours of the week according to Mark, one of our members.

Contact me for more information.

Bob Charlesworth

How do I love thee?

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways,
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.

I love thee to the level of everyday's
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.

I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhoods faith
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose

With my lost saints—I love thee with the
breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life! - and, if God choose
I shall but love thee better after death.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

All the Dates for February

Saturday Feb 1st : Jumble Sale 10am-12

Sunday 9th February 4pm. Zoom Service. Please speak to Avril if you would like to attend.

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Wednesday 12th February. Circuit meeting 7pm on Zoom. Please speak to Briony, Chris or Elaine if you would like to attend.

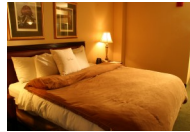
February 23rd. Joint Service before Rev. Donna goes on Sabbatical. All offers of refreshments after the service gratefully accepted.

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Replacement Batteries now available at the library stand

Replacement hearing aid batteries are now available from the Library Stand in the Market Hall on Mondays, 09.30-12.30, 13.30 - 16.30. It is only a battery replacement service, for anything else you still have to go elsewhere.

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