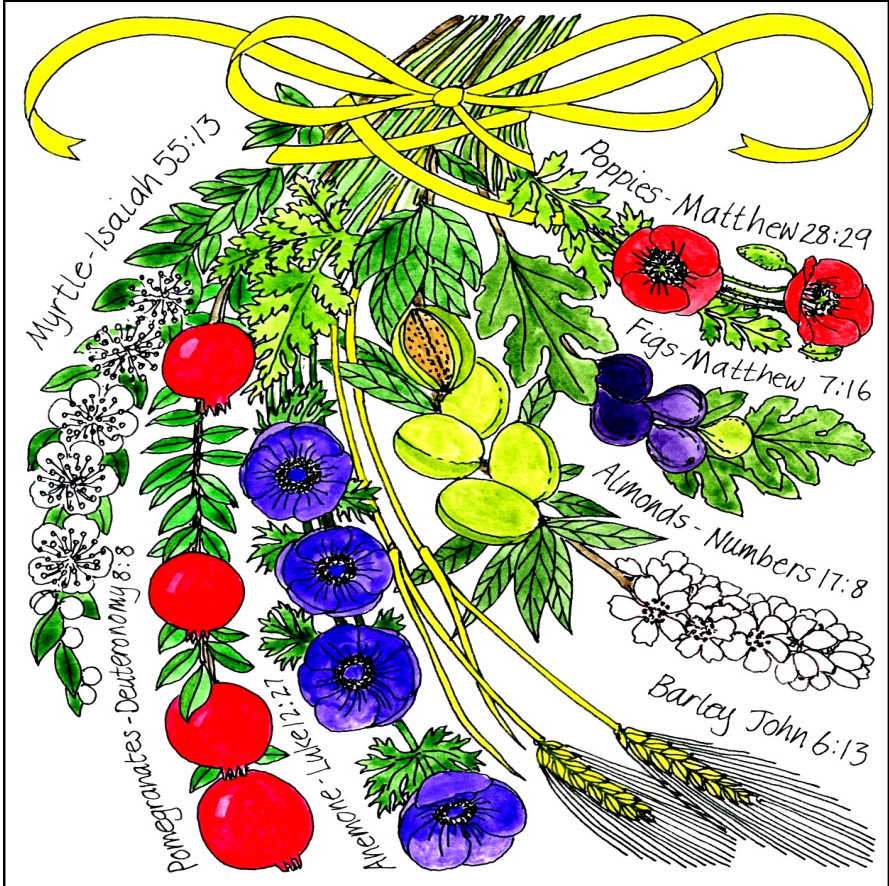


Connections

The Magazine of Ashbourne Methodist Circuit

<http://www.ashbournemethodist.org.uk>



Letter from the Minister

The Manse 16 Booth Drive Ashbourne Derbyshire DE6 1SZ
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July/August 2015

Dear Friends,

“Home and away”

The summer holiday season is upon us. I hope you manage to have time to get away, or to do something different, or to have friends, or family come to stay in this beautiful part of the Country.



Once again we will be going back to a cottage in Northumberland for our holiday. On the Sundays we shall join the same congregation as last year for worship – at Seahouses Methodist Church. They have an amazing stained-glass window to boot. They make us very welcome!

I am passionate about our ministry to visitors, as well as to regulars, or as I like to say, our “normal” congregation! That ministry is not just based around our various premises, but can also be done in communities where there are no church buildings.

That welcome and hospitality is also offered as we engage with local children, families and older people, not only on a Sunday, but also during the weekdays through our various activities.

‘Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.’ (Hebrews 13:2)



So whatever you do this summer: at home or away, enjoy the welcoming, and the being welcomed, for in doing so we are offering and being offered the hospitality of the Christian family, the love of Christ and the blessing of God. And you never know, we may just be “entertaining angels”.

Your minister and friend,

Tim

Circuit celebration Sunday June 7th

We had a sunny, if windy, afternoon for the Circuit Treasure Hunt and BBQ.... Lots of people ventured forth around the Churches and Chapels hunting for clues, meeting others along the way and visiting Chapels they had never been to before. The children had great fun looking for their own clues and collecting things.

Meanwhile the chefs were cooking sausages and burgers back in Brailsford and 95 of us enjoyed a BBQ followed by tea and lots of cake ! The circuit service was a joyful time of worship outdoors ,with 105 people of all ages plus two dogs and a baby !

It was good to see so many from different churches in the Circuit and to spend time in fellowship and praise. Many thanks to all who helped out in any way.

Helen Walker

Editor - See pictures on back cover.

PS

If you enjoyed that Circuit event then remember that next year there will be a Circuit Weekend away at Swanwick from **9th - 11th September**, if you haven't already done so, note the date now !



MISSION MATTERS

A few of us attended a workshop run by MHA, one of the church's mission partners, a few weeks ago to "explore how ageing, spirituality and faith are at the heart of the Church's mission". It was a joy to experience this, for me, new aspect of God's Mission. I was particularly taken by the session on "*Growing Dementia-Friendly Churches*". Partly, I guess, because both my parents suffered from this in their final years of life. But also because such effects of age will increase with us '1940s baby boomers'.

Below are some extracts from one of the excellent range of MHA booklets on the subject of ageing that were available on the day, well worth a read (see http://www.mha.org.uk/files/3814/0931/8295/Growing_Dementia_Friendly_Churches.pdf)

"To be a 'Dementia-Friendly Church' is to find ways to minister to people with dementia so that they know with everything in their being that they are 'held by God' as they are helped to experience once again life in all its fullness that Jesus promised to all.

There is a growing awareness in some churches of the challenges posed by dementia and people are beginning to ask questions. 'How can we make our churches more friendly, more inclusive? How can they be places where people who have dementia can feel their faith is being kept alive and nurtured?'

Dementia *unfriendliness* does not occur because people do not want to be dementia-friendly, but because most people either do not recognize that something needs to be done, or just do not know how to begin. Sometimes this is simply because of the word 'dementia', which can seem frightening.

Both the person who has dementia and the carer need to feel loved, valued and that they still 'belong.' Yet it is often the case that friends,

acquaintances and even other family members visit less and less. Consequently, loneliness and abandonment can be felt at a time when contact with others is needed the most.

What can we do?

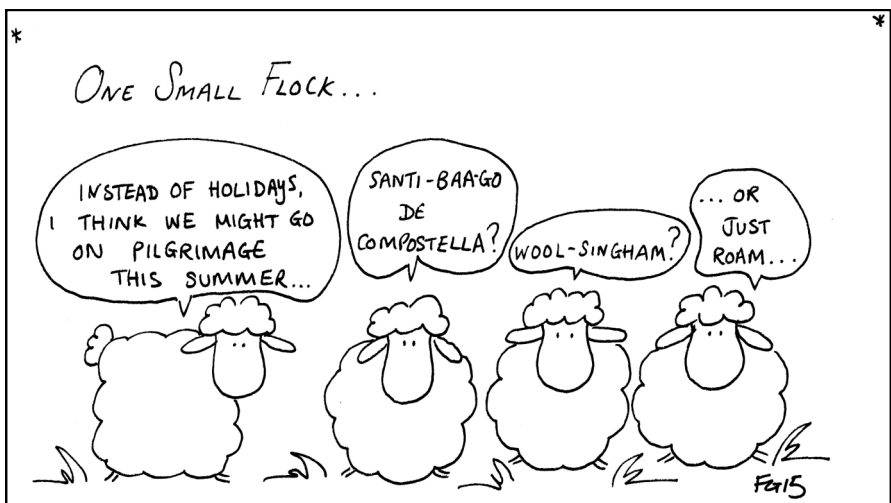
Don't lose contact, and try to find out why the person is no longer in church or at church events as regularly as they once were.

Stay present in what is real at that moment for the person. Listen to their story with compassion and respect, not trying to put them right. Remember that you are with an individual who has lived a life full of experiences and you need to find out about the other person's background, particularly the things that interested them so that you can help them to remember.

When a diagnosis of dementia is given, part of the worry for those to whom their faith is important is, how can I remember God? To say that God remembers them may be enough, but it is important to support their personal life of prayer and Bible study for as long as possible."

This only scratches the surface of a big and growing need. If you are interested in studying it further see the other MHA booklets. Also page 19 of the last "Connections" has details of a similar event on July 13th.

Richard Odell



Burkina Faso Project

Update!



Thank you to everyone who has supported the project to improve food security in Burkina Faso.

What's been happening in the Ashbourne area

Since our launch event at the Town Hall in March we have had two main fundraising events.

A concert by the Derbyshire Singers Chamber Choir raised over £450, while our Cake Stall at Tissington Well Dressings raised over £800.

We were also thrilled to receive a cheque from 2nd Ashbourne Scouts for £100 from a charity fundraising evening they held. Along with other donations we have already sent £1868.95 to Christian Aid.

Thank you to everyone who has supported our events: through prayer, by attending, or by practical support (particular thanks to those who baked so generously for our Tissington Cake Stall).

What's been happening in Burkina Faso

Within just a year, lives have been dramatically changed by the project. Your support and the work of Christian Aid's partner, ODE (the development wing of the evangelical churches in Burkina Faso) has already made the difference between hunger and hope. Of course, the project will continue but this is fantastically encouraging news.

Life before the project started - Gardening for pleasure was not an option, it was vital for daily survival. If people didn't have crops they couldn't eat because selling crops is their main source of income. Crops fail due to drought and even when there were rains the soil quality was so poor, crops weren't always guaranteed.

Life now - ODE set up a market garden where villagers are able to grow crops even in the dry season. People are given the opportunity to

help with the preparation of the site, and in exchange were given the the plot which they now cultivate. It produces crops throughout the year – rice in the rainy season and vegetables in the dry season. Children are going to school for the first time as families have used cash earned from selling produce grown on their plot to pay for the fees. Families now also have enough money for the essentials: food, clothes and healthcare.

Awa Djigumde who has been helped by the project offers a prayer for us: “God bless all those who think of us and who help us. I pray that they’d know that their help has changed my life and that of my whole family. Their help has freed me from extreme poverty.”

What next?

Over the next few years this project will continue to change the lives of even more families.

Could you hold a small-scale event to raise money for this project? A coffee morning or cake sale?

Peggy & George Spencer are doing just that on **Friday 3rd July**. Come along and enjoy an evening in their garden from **5.00pm** with tea, coffee, cakes and children’s games. Proceeds will be shared between Hlland Bourne Methodist Chapel and the Burkina Faso Project. Their address is Magfield Farm, Smith Hall Lane, Hlland Ward, DE6 3ES Also, look out for a cake stall after the service at Ashbourne Methodist Church – more details coming soon!

And whatever you do, please join us in praying for the project:

- Please pray that God guides and gives the officers wisdom as they help the poorest and most vulnerable families benefit from this program.
- Please pray for the health of the mothers, fathers and children, that they will gain strength and are able to support themselves.
- Please pray for the continued success of this project so we can change more lives for the better.

Ashbourne Churches Together One World Group

Kniveton Chapel

We continue to meet as usual on the 2nd Sunday in the month at 2.30 pm and the 4th Sunday at 11 am. On **12th July**, however, we will not have a service at Kniveton but will join friends at Ashbourne Methodist Church at **3 pm** for the Ashbourne Churches Together service to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Salvation Army, and we look forward to that.

We will celebrate our Chapel Anniversary on **26th July at 11 am**, and we are looking forward to welcoming Mrs Ann Parkinson to take our service.

Forward notice – on **Sunday, 13th September at 2.30 pm** we have planned a Mission Service, to be held in the **Village Hall in Kniveton**. We have invited Rev Chris Eddy, who served for some years in Sierra Leone, and Mr David Bale to take this service. The theme will be work being done in villages in SL in which Chris and David have contacts. If you were at our Christmas service in December you will remember that we agreed at that service to give the offering to help with the Ebola crisis, particularly in Sierra Leone, and also to the humanitarian crisis in Syria.

The gifts have also helped with schooling in the villages supported by Chris and David. We will post a reminder about this in the next issue. There will be tea and cakes after the service, which will give an opportunity to talk to Chris and David. The collection at this service will be given to Chris to send to Kepia to buy school materials, details of which will be available at the service.

Betty Hadley

Hulland

Dorothy Prior says "I would like to thank you all for your messages, cards etc which I received for my recent 90th birthday. I was quite overwhelmed by everyone's kindness."

George and Peggy Spencer are opening their garden from **5.00pm** onwards on **July 3rd** in aid of the Burkino Fasa Project and Hulland Bourne Chapel. (See previous page for details)

Ashbourne Circuit Church Services

Sunday July 5th

Ashbourne	9:15am	Mr Peter Dawson	Café Style
	10:30am	Mr Peter Dawson	Theme Preach 3
	18:30pm	Rev Tim Morris	Communion
Brailsford	10:00am		United Service at Parish
Hulland	18:30pm	Fiona Green	Theme Preach 2

Sunday July 12th

Ashbourne	10:30am	Rev Tim Morris	
	15:00pm	ACT service at Methodist celebrating the Salvation Army	
	18:30pm	no service	
Brailsford	10:30am	Mr Tom Parkinson	
Hulland	18:30pm	Mr Peter Dawson	Theme Preach 3
Kniveton	14:30pm	Mr Stuart Mustow	
Parwich	14:30pm	no service	

Sunday July 19th

Ashbourne	10:30am	Rev Harry Jones	Chapel Anniversary, HC
	18:30pm	Praise in Century Hall	
Brailsford	10:30am	Miss Diana Whitmill	All Age, 9:15am Breakfast
Hulland	18:30pm	Rev Tim Morris	
Parwich	10:00am		United Service at Parish
Tissington	10:30am	Sister Merle Wilde	

Sunday July 26th

Ashbourne	10:30am	Mr Tim Dutton	,
	18:30pm	Fiona Green	
Brailsford	10:30am	Mr John Dyster	Theme Preach 1
Hulland	18:30pm	Mr Tom Parkinson	
Kirk Ireton	18:30pm	Sister Merle Wilde	
Kniveton	11:00am	Mrs Ann Parkinson	Chapel Anniversary
Parwich	14:30pm	Mr Peter Dawson	

Sunday August 2nd

Ashbourne	9:15am	Rev Mark Broadhurst	Café Style
	10:30am	Rev Mark Broadhurst	
	18:30pm	Mrs Ann Parkinson	
Brailsford	10:45am	Fiona Green	Theme Preach 2
			United Service at Methodist
Hulland	18:00pm	no service	

Sunday August 9th

Ashbourne	10:30am	Mr Stuart Mustow	
	18:30pm	Mr John Dyster	
Brailsford	10:30am	Mr Peter Dawson	Theme Preach 3
Hulland	18:30pm	Fiona Green	
Kniveton	14:30pm	Sister Merle Wilde	
Parwich	14:30pm	Rev Tim Morris	Communion

Sunday August 16th

Ashbourne	10:30am	Rev Tim Morris	Communion
	18:30pm	Praise	in Century Hall
Brailsford	10:30am	Mr Robert Sales	All Age, 9:15am Breakfast
Hulland	14:30pm	@ Tissington	
Parwich	10:00am		United Service at Parish
Tissington	14:30pm	Mr Jim Titterton	Chapel Anniversary, Circuit Service

Sunday August 23rd

Ashbourne	10:30am	Mrs Ann Parkinson	
	18:30pm	Rev Tim Morris	Communion
Brailsford	10:30am	Rev Tim Morris	Communion
Hulland	18:30pm	Mr John Dyster	
Kirk Ireton	18:30pm	Mr Tom Parkinson	
Kniveton	11:00am	Mr Tim Dutton	
Parwich	14:30pm	Sister Merle Wilde	

Sunday August 30th

Ashbourne	10:30am	Rev Tim Morris	
	18:00pm	Mr Peter Dawson	
Brailsford	10:00am	Mrs Ann Parkinson	
Hulland	18:30pm	Songs of Praise @ Christ Church	

Visitors from Patna Diocese

Many thanks to all who have helped and will be helping with the visit of Rev Manoj Singh and Rev Daniel Murmu. We are very sorry that the other two presbyters were refused visas. A full report of the visit will be in the next edition. Meanwhile, if anyone is interested in visiting Patna, probably in the Autumn, would they please talk to John or Elizabeth Hurfurt, Clare Sales or Arthur Watts.

Ashbourne Church Family News

We pray for those recently bereaved, their families and friends.

Congratulations to Lorna Bale and 'Raj' Basak who married on Saturday 27 June.

Joan Constable is now at St Mary's Nursing home, Ednaston where she is likely to be for the foreseeable future. She would very much welcome visitors at any time as since her falls she is unable to get out. If you want to know more, Rose will put you in the picture. John Parry is now settled at Dove House and he too would welcome visitors.

We continue to pray for Tim's parents as his father remains very unwell and for Tim, Alison, Samuel and Jacob. We pray for those who remain unwell, for those recovering from surgery and those who care for them including Margaret and Don Cox, Ena and Trevor Staniforth, Brenda Hallam, Rachel Murt, Margaret Smith and Doris Harrison.

Our love and prayers to Emily Marsh, older daughter of Sue and Nigel, who is going to work in Malawi for nine weeks as part of her training to be a doctor.

Others are undergoing tests, or waiting for tests, or waiting for appointments with consultants or on a waiting list for an operation. This can be a very worrying and difficult time. We pray too for others who are in a period of great difficulty for whatever reason, who prefer not to be named, including those with concerns over health issues, concerns for members of their family, those unhappy in their work or looking for work and those with mental health difficulties. All these circumstances can cause our faith to be severely tested. We often do not know what is going on in people's lives, none of us is immune from problems.

Congratulations to Don and Margaret Cox who celebrate their Diamond wedding anniversary on 16 July. Congratulations to Rachel and Derek Murt who celebrate their silver wedding on 30 June.

Our best wishes to Sue McKeown who retires in July from her work as a teaching assistant at St Oswald's school.

Noreen Allen and Gwenda Alcock are retiring from being Worship Stewards from the end of August and Ken Sharples as Leadership steward for learning and caring, but we are pleased he will continue to be an (evening) worship steward and that Enid Stubbs is to be a worship steward too. We wish them all well for the future. Please pray for the Ashbourne Leadership Team and for our circuit stewards as they undertake their responsibilities.

We continue to pray for Stephen, son of Jonathan and Isabel Hill, our mission partners in Zimbabwe, who is studying at Derby.

If anyone would like prayer, there are people who pray regularly, normally on a Thursday at 1pm in the Vestry. Anyone is welcome to attend. Please contact Liz Mawdsley (344420) or Margaret Sharples (310072) if you want to know more. After worship on a Sunday, there are people available to pray with you or for you. Please ask a steward who has a list of people willing to do this.

As you are probably aware we have many job vacancies including crèche co-ordinator, Powersource staff, and Leadership steward. **All these roles urgently need filling.** Please prayerfully consider whether you could fill any one of these roles and if not, pray that others will come forward.

Our prayerful thanks go to Betty Hadley, Margaret Heaton, and Brenda Micklethwaite who have "run" the Tuesday Fellowship over many years. This will finish in its present form this month.

Elizabeth Spencer is part of the Chaplaincy Team at the Royal Derby Hospital as a Chaplaincy Visitor. She is also a Hospital Visitor at St Oswald's Hospital in Ashbourne. Could anyone who knows of people who are in hospital, or due to be, please let her know, if you would like prayers or for her to visit (348482). We are sad that she recently decided not to continue as a pastoral visitor but will continue in her role at the RDH.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him and he will direct your paths."
Proverbs Chapter 3 v 5-6 NIV

Daphne Dyster, Pastoral Secretary 17.6.15

Ashbourne Methodist Church – Property Review

At the Annual Church Meeting on 11th May, there was a presentation by Ian Marsh on the options for future property development. CPL Architects had been appointed to undertake an options review, and their report had been received.

Three possible options were presented:

1. Keep, and remodel, all the current buildings, but dispose of the land at the back.
2. Keep, and remodel, the church, Gateway and The Cornerstone, but dispose of the remaining buildings and the land at the back.
3. Dispose of all the existing property and move to a new site.

The meeting discussed these options in groups. Notes of the discussions were collected and individuals were invited to send in their comments. There was no support for Option 1, and opinion was divided between Option 2 and Option 3. There was a widespread feeling that any new site should be within the town centre.

Afterwards, a joint meeting of the Leadership Team and the Resources Team agreed that both Options 2 and 3 must be explored further. We need to clarify the vision of the church and how this relates to the accommodation we require, for current activities and for likely future developments. This might rule out one of the options. We also need to consider planning issues and projected costs.

Views about accommodation requirements have now been collected from various church groups, and a further joint meeting of the teams will be held on **Saturday 4th July**. Following this, a discussion document will be prepared and circulated to the church.

On Monday **14th September**, there will be a special General Meeting of the church to discuss the issues further. Following that, the next step will be decided by the Church Council on **12th October**.

John Dyster

John Hurfurt



Shoe Boxes

We are beginning to make preparations for this year's project, although as usual we don't know yet where they will be sent to. To start us off we are planning to hold a table top sale in The Cornerstone Café on the last weekend in August for 2 days **Friday 28th** and **Saturday 29th**. We will be 'open' during café hours. There will be bric a brac bargains, cakes and preserves, and second-hand books. If you can contribute anything to these stalls please contact one of the team – Chris (Dakin), Sheila (Cook), Margaret (Heaton), Brenda (Micklethwaite) or Betty (Hadley). This will raise funds for the transport of the boxes.

We will have our usual Coffee Morning in October, with more specific shoe box gifts for sale, and of course covered boxes. Many of you find this helpful, as there are many things available, e.g. knitted goods, and stationery items, at very reasonable prices.

We hope to have a table in Century Hall after a morning service in October/November. More about this later.

For further information and leaflets about the shoe boxes please ring me, Betty Hadley (01335 300699)



24-hour Trampolinathon!

Mustard will be trampolining for 24 hours from **6pm on Friday 10th July to 6pm on Saturday 11th July.**

As a group we'll bounce all through the night to raise money for the Burkina Faso Project, a Christian Aid project to improve food security in Burkina Faso. If you are able to sponsor us, please see someone from *Mustard* who will have a sponsor form. We'd also like to invite some of the younger children to join us on the Saturday to take a turn at bouncing, and everyone else to come and support us and help keep us going from 12 noon on Saturday. There will be tea and cakes and we'd really appreciate your support! We'll be at the Glossop's house, Hilltop Lodge, Rodsley.

Catherine Green

REFLECTIONS.

Time certainly moves on! Since I last wrote under this title when the first Swallow had arrived, we now have the air full of House Martins and Swallows, although, personally I think numbers are down since last year as there does not seem to be as many as I remember from 2014. But nobody has, as yet, usurped the Sparrow from its nest, and the Wren still screeches at anyone who gets near. Also, in the bird population, we seem to have an abundance of Jackdaws this year!

Sometime ago I was talking to a friend and they said they had heard a Cuckoo, which we have not heard for some time. There was an item on the television which said as the Sahara Desert is expanding southwards, the Cuckoo's that once made it to England from their nesting ground in mid Africa, no longer can, due to the lengthening range they have to fly, so are now residing in France and / or Spain. So I wonder if the decrease in our House Martins and Swallows is also due to this, only time will tell.

However, our animals are outside, and our workload is slightly diminished as they can now feed themselves, although we still check them morning and evening to ensure they keep together, as calves have an incredible knack of finding a hole in a fence that we cannot see, and also we check to ensure they are all healthy and keep that way.

Time does move on, the days, the months, the seasons and the weather changes, the latter sometimes good, sometimes bad. We were hot in the weeks after Easter when you expect the weather to be cool and cold, in late May and June when you expect temperatures to rise, they didn't.

On a personal note, one thought one had shed enough tears when my mother passed away at the beginning of the year, but the recent advent of birthdays of hers and mine, when one did not receive a card, or one could not send one, for the first time, brought forth more tears. Yet in the calendar of nature and my personal calendar, my faith remains in the one who is eternal in a universe of change. When things ebb and flow, He, the Lord, is always, as he promised, there, to the end of the age.

T.P.



Methodist Women in Britain

District Day

Our next District Day will be on **Monday 13 July** at Ripley Methodist Church. Coffee is served from 10.30 am (Registration £2.00) and we commence with devotions and business at 11 am. We break for lunch at approximately 12.30 pm (packed lunch required). The speaker at the Service in the afternoon commencing at 2 pm will be the Rev Dr Keith Albans of Methodist Homes. His topic will be 'Dementia Friendly Churches' which has just commenced to be a MWiB project to make Churches more aware of this and to encourage us to be dementia friends. Keith Albans is very good in all that he does so will be very well worth hearing. Why not come along?

Circuit Event

Our next Circuit event will be a meeting at Hulland on **3 September** at **2.15 pm** when the speaker will be the Rev Carollyn Madonald. Please make a note in your diary.

Alma Swan

Prayers for our children (2)

Editor - Here is the second of some of the petitions we might consider using when we are praying for our children and the children of our church.

For discernment. In 1 Kings 3:5, God gave King Solomon an open invitation to ask for anything he wanted. Solomon requested a heart to discern good from evil in order to judge God's people, and the Lord was so pleased that He showered the ruler with riches and honour, elevating him beyond all of his contemporaries – and blessed him with a long, healthy life to boot. Pray for the same kind of discernment for your children; ask God to let them see as He sees, be attracted to what pleases and glorifies Him, be repelled by the things that displease him, and understand the difference clearly and consistently.

Holy Overshadowing

O spread Your wings of mercy over me
And guard my heart with true humility
No shadow of the darkness pressing in
Only the holy overshadowing
Underneath Your wings, overshadowing

No refuge will I seek but God alone
No hiding place save only at Your throne
Only the cross, the blood to wash my sin
Only the holy overshadowing
Underneath Your wings, overshadowing

*You are my shield, and my glory
You are the lifter of my head
And though the storms may rage around me
I'll be safe within
Beneath the holy overshadowing*

No burden on my back too hard to bear
Only the easy load You bid me wear
Until these troubles pass, my heart will sing
Praise for the holy overshadowing
Underneath Your wings, overshadowing

Chorus

Underneath Your wings
Overshadowing, overshadowing

Ben Trigg © 2013 www.bentrigg.co.uk & Graham Kendrick © 2013

Make Way Music•

Editor - *This song was recently sung at morning worship at AMC by Tim and Becky Dutton and the words are printed here by request.*

Methodist Conference

This year's Methodist Conference takes place in Southport at the Southport Theatre & Convention Centre from **25 June to 2 July**. The Conference is the governing body of the Methodist Church and meets annually to discuss matters affecting the life of the Church, the nation and the world.

Highlights this year include:

- the induction of the new President (the Revd Steven Wild) and the Vice-President (Dr Jill Barber) on Saturday 27 June at 2.15pm, followed by their addresses
- new ministers being received into Full Connexion and ordination services on Sunday 28 June from 10.45am
- *Courage, Cost & Hope*: the report on the past cases review on Monday 29 June at 11.15am
- issues of Connexionalism on Tuesday 30 June at 11.15am
- mission and heritage activities resourced by the President and Vice-President on Tuesday 30 June at 2.15pm
- discussion of fossil fuels and ethical investment on Thursday 2 July at 9.30am
- induction of the new Secretary of the Conference on Thursday 4 July at 11:15am.

Video of debates and Conference worship will be streamed live online through the Conference website; - www.methodist.org.uk/conference2015.

Steve Wild - President of the Conference 2015/2016

Born in Rochdale in 1954, Steve Wild gave his life to Christ at a Cliff College Mission in 1968. He worked as a printer but heard God calling him to the Methodist ministry when he visited Taize.

Married to Laura, an artist, he began 15 years of circuit ministry first in Preston and then in St Ives, Cornwall. In 1998 he became Cornwall District Evangelism Enabler and then Connexional Evangelism Enabler Coordinator as well as working part-time with Westcountry TV presenting programmes about Christianity in the South West.

From 2004 Steve worked at Cliff College as Director of Evangelism and tutor. He returned to Cornwall in 2008 to become Chair of the Cornwall District. You may even have seen him in an episode of the BBC's *'An Island Parish'*.

The contrast of Steve's urban roots in Lancashire and his ministry in rural Cornwall gives him broad insight, particularly concerning people experiencing hardship and poverty. Steve is known widely as a man of compassion, prayer, love and encouragement for people of all ages and backgrounds.

Jill Barber - Vice-President of the Conference 2015/2016

Jill Barber grew up in Kent where she attended Petts Wood Methodist Church with her family. At 16, she became a Sunday School teacher and has enjoyed working with young people ever since.

Jill studied English and Librarianship at Aberystwyth University where met her husband, Peter. She spent her first year of married life at St George's Men's Care Centre, Stepney. Jill lives in Crewe, where Peter is Chair of the Chester and Stoke on Trent District.

Jill's career has taken a varied and exciting path. She started out as a children's librarian in Canning Town, later training as a history teacher in Cambridge. After moving from Cornwall, Jill completed a PhD in Historical Methodology at Aberystwyth University. In 1994 she became Education Officer at Westminster Archives, where she researched and developed resources for African Caribbean History. In 2006, Jill became Head of Heritage Services for Hertfordshire County Council. Since 2011, Jill has been Project Director at Englesea Brook Chapel.

‘Do you hear the people sing?’ – can you understand what their message is?

Since New Testament times, Christians have loved to sing together. No wonder – it is part of our understanding of the world that music was written into the very fabric of creation when ‘the morning stars sang together’ (Job 38:4).

It is thus vital that both our words and music reflect the creative and saving actions of God. They must also possess the power to inspire an entire congregation in united joy. And – of desperate importance to evangelists such as William Booth and the Wesleys - can incoming visitors relate to our songs, on entering our meetings? In D.L. Moody’s words. *“Music and the Bible are the two important agencies with which to reach the world.”*

Fanny Crosby of New England grasped this throughout her life. Blinded, owing to a medical accident at only six weeks old, she was nevertheless compensated in her disability with an astonishing memory. Aided by her Puritan grandmother, she gave herself to the Scriptures. By the time she was 12 she knew by heart the first five books of the Bible, the four Gospels and all 150 Psalms.

Out of this rich storehouse poured the songs: *Blessed Assurance.... To God be the glory.... He hideth my soul in the cleft of the Rock*. In all there were 9,000 of them, and they filtered all over the world.

Destructive German critical theology was beginning to flood everywhere, and there was little to protect the beliefs of Bible lovers, for evangelical theology had yet to find its feet. But what held Gospel believers across the continents were the hymns. That was enough!

Thank God for today’s hymn writers such as Stuart Townend and Keith and Kristyn Getty in Ireland. If a church worshipper can actually walk out of church HUMMING – much as an audience from ‘*Les Miserables*’ will do so, with *Do you hear the People Sing?* – we can believe that Christian songs could again inspire future crowds - at FA Cup Finals or as England steps out on the field for the Rugby World Cup!

Richard Bewes



Editor: The Rev Dr Gary Bowness continues his tongue-in-cheek letters from 'Uncle Eustace'

On why people complain to the vicar – and how to ignore them

From The Rectory
St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

So, you have received your first letter of complaint. I am not wholly unsympathetic with your complainant, as attempting to marry the bride to the best man would have created havoc with the seating arrangements at the reception. However, you must learn that receiving letters of complaint is an integral part of the ordained ministry. After 50 years of parish life, the number of such letters I have received are now held in bound volumes.

The anonymous ones you will receive, invariably written in green ink on lined notepaper, can be safely consigned to your waste paper basket, along with all mail, from whatever source, labelled "Urgent". You will receive letters complaining that you did not pray for someone who was in hospital, regardless of the fact that you knew nothing of it. Probably by the next post, you will receive a letter complaining that you did pray for someone in hospital – when they had wanted to keep their cosmetic surgery secret.

Those who regard themselves as guardians of doctrinal purity will write complaining of the heresies contained in the previous Sunday's sermon. These can be filed with those letters that complain that your sermons are too short, along with those who complain that they are too long.

The hourly striking of the church clock is a perennial favourite for complaints. I usually reply by saying that we are currently exploring the possibility of getting it to strike the quarters too.

Letters of complaint will arrive in November, complaining that the church is too cold, so making prayer impossible. Others will drop on the doormat in April saying that it is too hot, so making prayer impossible. In Spring, some will write that the churchyard should be mown more often, while others will complain that it is mown too often and ruins it as a habitat for wildlife.

The annual Summer procession of witness generates complaints that the brass band ruined the slumbers of parishioners having a Sunday lie-in. Then come Harvest, there will be the letters complaining that they did not receive a Harvest gift, which was particularly unforgivable, as their grandmother had once sung in the choir. Thus the annual round is accompanied by reams of notepaper.

The only letter of complaint I have really treasured came from the bishop, rebuking me for never having attended any meeting when he was present. I have had it framed and hung on the study wall.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

M'bungoni Methodist Church Kenya

On behalf of Onesmus Mwabonje thank you to those who contributed so generously to his appeal in last month's "Connections" on behalf of this church's refurbishment.

June Shaw made a donation in memory of her late husband Richard with grateful thanks to all those who have helped and supported her and continue to do so.

We are seeing Onesmus in July and I am hopeful we will have reached his target by this time.

Arthur Watts

From the Editor

Dear Friends,

I hope you enjoy this summer edition of "Connections". The September edition will be published on **August 30th** with a copy deadline of **9.00pm** on **August 19th**.

Have a great summer!

Arthur Watts

ASHBOURNE CHURCH ACTIVITIES

Sun	6:30pm	Mustard (Youth Fellowship)
Mon	10:00am	Housegroup: weekly <i>Contact - David Heaton (343418)</i>
	2.00pm	Craft and Chat in The Cornerstone <i>Contact - Clare Sales (342321)</i>
	7:30pm	Housegroup: weekly <i>Contact - Helen Walker (343910)</i>
Tues	9.00am	kids@cornerstone <i>Contact - Clare Sales (342321)</i>
	10:00am	Housegroup: weekly <i>Contact - John & Elizabeth Hurfurt (342859)</i>
	12:30pm	Luncheon Club: last Tuesday in month, Century Hall
Wed	9:30am	Walk and Talk Group: 1st, 3rd & 5th Wednesday Amble & Ramble (easier walking): 2nd & 4th Weds
	7:30pm	Housegroup: fortnightly <i>Contact - Ken and Margaret Sharples (310072)</i>
Thurs	7:30pm	Housegroup: fortnightly - 1st and 3rd Thursdays <i>Contact - Jeff Ffoulkes (300443)</i>
Thurs, Fri, Sat	10:00am	The Cornerstone Coffee Shop <i>Contact - Pat Fielding (345695)</i>

BRILSFORD CHURCH ACTIVITIES

Sun	9:15am	Breakfast: monthly, 3rd Sunday
Tues	9:30am	Coffee Shop: weekly
Wed	12:30pm	Luncheon Club: monthly, 2nd Wednesday

HULLAND CHURCH ACTIVITIES

Wed	7:30pm	Bible Study: monthly, 3rd Wednesday
Thurs	2:15pm	Women's Fellowship: monthly, 1st Thursday

KIRK IRETON CHURCH ACTIVITIES

Wed	7:30pm	Fellowship: monthly, 3rd Wednesday
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CIRCUIT BARBECUE AND WORSHIP - BRAILSFORD

