

# Connections



Ashbourne Methodist Circuit  
Magazine April 2020

## Letter from the Minister

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Dear Friends,

### “Giving up Church for Lent”

We are certainly living in exceptional times! Who would have thought that we'd not be able to be together to worship at Easter. Who would have thought that we'd have to give up Church for Lent!

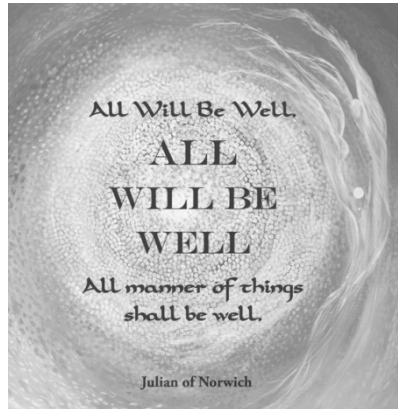
At our evening PRAISE service on the first Sunday of Lent at Ashbourne I reflected on the idea that “I'm not doing Lent this year. I'm going to let Lent do me”.

Little did I realise how true that would begin to feel. I can't go about doing Lent things. Lent - a time of fasting, prayer, wilderness, questions, doubts and fears – is now doing me.

How can Lent do us, how can we worship if we're not together? Well of course Church is not about the building, it's about the people. And perhaps now, more than ever before, we need to realise the truth of that oft quoted statement.


Hopefully by now you will have had the letter from our Church informing you of the steps we are taking regarding pastoral care, serving our community, worship, prayer and how we can fulfil our calling. Regular updates will be sent out each week, with signposts to worship available online, or in print. I hope you find these useful.

Thank you to those who are helping to maintain our communications with people in their own homes through our website, email and post. Thank you for the pastoral care we are still able to offer, especially by phone. And thank you to those who are enabling the churches in Ashbourne, Tissington and Milldale to remain open for people to come and sit quietly at this time.



I hope and pray that during this time we will be Church – to ourselves, our families and our neighbours. May we feel God with us all at this extraordinary time. We are Easter People - so may the news of hope, new life and resurrection in Christ continue to warm our hearts, calm our minds and give us assurance for the future.

Your minister and friend,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Tomis". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style. The first name "Tom" is written above the second name "Tomis", which is underlined.

## **Ashbourne Church Family News**

*“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”  
Psalm 46 v 1*

The coronavirus is spreading across the globe, and fear along with it. As well as the impact of the virus on people’s health, it has a destructive impact on many aspects of our economy and society here in UK. At this time of foreboding, how can we respond as God’s children?

Let’s remember:

- that God is sovereign: he knows what’s happening, and he is able both to heal and to turn suffering to good
- that our Heavenly Father is filled with compassion for all those he has created; he has good plans for our lives
- that he has called us to shine like lights in the darkness, to bring hope to all who will receive it.

He calls us to pray – not out of fear, but with confidence. We could use this simple prayer from Ascension Trust:

*“Father God, please bring comfort to those who have lost loved ones, healing to those who are sick, strength to those who are caring for them and wisdom to those who are making decisions in Government. In it all, help us your people to trust in you and be carriers of hope and reassurance, healing and peace in every situation in Jesus’ name, Amen”*

Our prayers are powerful and effective. They matter. They make a difference. As we pray for each other, let’s make those encouraging phone calls/emails/texts and support each other.

Congratulations to Tony Walker, who will be the High Sheriff of Derbyshire from 2 April for one year, and to Andrew Lewer, who has become the Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Home Office.

We can be grateful for all the people in the Ashbourne Community Support Group and the village support groups who have offered help to those of us who need to be self- isolating.

In the current circumstances, we are all affected and need to keep praying for each other. Let's remember particularly Ann Overton, Carole Thorpe, Elizabeth Spencer, Jenny Waring, David Franklin, Barbara Hollands, Sally Wall and Betty Hadley. Many are affected with the change in the hospital appointments and procedures being cancelled and tests not done. Please remember all those who care for others.

We need to pray for all our young people and families who are affected by closure of schools and the change of routine, and for those who need to work out of the home but where childcare is an issue.

Although we cannot meet together to pray, I am sure we are all praying at home for the pandemic and those caught up in it. If you have specific matters you would like to share with someone for prayer, contact your pastoral visitor or housegroup.

We should continue to pray for Ruth Barratt and Elizabeth Spencer who are part of Chaplaincy teams.

*Joyce Odell Pastoral Secretary 18.03.20*

## **Football in the Street**

The day after the announcement that we should avoid all non-essential social contact, I was walking down Old Derby Road and was surprised to see a group of three girls kicking a football about in the middle of the road.

The road is usually busy with cars and buses, so this wasn't something I'd ever seen before on our street!

Isn't it interesting how life expands to fill the empty spaces?

As we are forced to stop doing some things, spaces will open up in our lives. I pray that they will be filled with new, interesting things and perhaps even fresh experiences of the love of God.

*Stuart Green*

## Craft & Chat

Craft & Chat will not be able to meet on a Monday afternoon in the Cornerstone for some time.

We'd like to reassure everyone who comes along that being a community doesn't depend on being able to meet. Our friendships and our fellowship are much stronger than that, and also very precious to us.



### What do we suggest?

- We hoping that as many of us as possible will feel able to sit down at 2 ish on a Monday afternoon with a cuppa and in our own homes just get on with a little bit of knitting or crochet or whatever your creative skill happens to be. If you don't usually come to Craft & Chat you could still do this alongside us. Just knowing we're doing this separately but 'together in spirit' sustains our fellowship.
- We have projects 'on the needles' at the moment and although we don't yet know whether the yarnbombing will be possible, preparing for it is not wasted. What we make will be still be used when we have our next yarnbombing event.
- Our Facebook page will continue to show what we are making. If you'd like a picture of your work to feature, please email it to [onesmallflock@btinternet.com](mailto:onesmallflock@btinternet.com). We don't put names on so you can stay anonymous! Look out for links to free patterns and how-to videos online.
- We can phone one another to stay in touch
- We can pray for one another
- If you need wool and needles let Clare know. We have a large stash of donated supplies and it can be dropped off on your doorstep.

Thank you to everyone who supports Craft & Chat,

*Clare and Fiona*

## Renewal and rebellion

*“The valuing of people and the environment is central to our faith”*

Those were the challenging words of another attendee at a conference in Derby, which Clare Sales and I recently attended. The words echoed those that were included in a conversation starter booklet I picked up at the conference...

*“As Christians we believe people were created in God’s image, and to have abundant life. And we believe that we are part of God’s creation. Our flourishing is dependent on the flourishing of our communities and the whole creation, for we are created interdependently.”*

*(Turning the World Upside Down, JPIT)*

And yet, theologian Professor Anthony Reddie feels that it is to our shame that we have not been at the forefront of responding to climate crisis, despite the fact that we are as stewards of our God-given world and it is *“simply the Gospel”*.

Anthony Reddie was one of the participants in the keynote panel, alongside Barry Gardiner MP and political economist Katherine Trebeck.

The panel talked about how, despite our environment being in serious trouble, our economic system continues to contribute to the crisis. Our economic system is focussed on growth in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In other words, creating an ever bigger economy. Barry Gardiner MP made the point that Jesus talked about true wealth in his parables and that true wealth is not about GDP.

Katherine Trebeck talked about how the economy matters, but said that *“it’s not the be-all and end-all – it’s how we provide for each other.”*

Barry Gardiner explained that, to address global warming, the IPCC said that there will need to be *“far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society”*. Isn’t that similar to the change that Jesus brings, he asked?

Throughout the day, we heard about the importance of the upcoming UN Climate Change Conference, “COP26”, which will be held in Glasgow in November under UK presidency. The Paris Climate Conference in 2015 brought important pledges to respond to climate change, and the intention was to seriously increase commitments at this year’s conference.

Talking about the climate crisis and the potential impact on our planet, Anthony Reddie talked about the fact that we need to accept and recognise that we are the problem. He also encouraged us to look beyond the obvious, saying:

*“That’s the gift of God. What God enables us to do, through the power of the Spirit, through our reflections, with our tradition with one another, is to see beyond the obvious. God enables us to see that it’s not about growth and greed and exploitation. It’s something deeper than that: it’s about people, and it’s about sharing this home, this planet... that we’ve been given, as stewards, to look after. And we’ve been given each other, also, to look after.”*

However, this will need politicians to make brave decisions, and Barry Gardiner said that politicians don’t like making brave decisions – they prefer to make decisions that follow the public mood. He encouraged us to hold politicians to account, ideally on a short-term basis, and also to work to give politicians confidence to make brave decisions for the good of our world.

In the afternoon, we heard from a panel of three young climate activists, chaired by the youngest MSP, Ross Greer, who was just 21 when elected to the Scottish Parliament.

Ali Greaves, a newly-qualified paediatric nurse who has represented the UK at the United Nations Youth Conference, talked about how she’d seen first-hand the impacts of climate change in places in Africa. She said *“It made me really frustrated and angry to see people who, as God’s people, we should love and care for”*.

Aaron Smith, an activist from Birmingham, said that we need to recognise that our actions affect people in the global south now and asked *“How could a Christian stand by and let that happen?”*

He further challenged the audience: *“How could you look future generations in the eye and tell them that you destroyed their future because you cared more about your ISA, investments, diet, cars & travel?”*

Isaac Harvey, a film-maker, talked about the impact of a short film he’d made which had helped to influence investment decisions by the URC.

This panel talked about what we could do:

- We can do small things collectively
- We can talk to each other about it
- We can be kind to each other
- We can do things with people and the environment at heart
- We can change our bank or our diet
- We can start a dialogue with our MP

If you'd like to know more, please talk to me or to Clare. You can also watch videos from the day:

- Video of the morning worship, welcome and keynote panel - <http://tiny.cc/renew1>
- Video of the young activists' panel, plenary and closing reflections - <http://tiny.cc/renew2>

*Stuart Green*

## **Circuit Directory and Prayer Diary**

The 2020 version of the Circuit Directory and Prayer Diary has been printed and distributed to pastoral visitors and house groups (under the current circumstances these may not be delivered for a while). If you would like a second copy please let Carole Thorpe know as there are a few extra copies available.

This directory has been produced for use in the Ashbourne Methodist Circuit and is only to be used for Methodist Church purposes. It should be kept securely and old copies destroyed by shredding. Please accept apologies for any errors. Any amendments should be sent to the Circuit Administrator: Carole Thorpe (telephone 346535) or 12 Cavendish Drive, DE6 1SR.

Please do not pass on details of email addresses without asking the permission of the person involved. Alternatively, send the email to yourself and use the BCC (blind carbon copy) area for other addresses to give some confidentiality. Please also ensure that you use anti-virus software.



# **My testimony**

## **by Kath Brown**

I became a Christian at the age of 16 years. That was when it all made sense to me. I had been to Sunday school at St John's, so I already knew songs and stories about Jesus.

I liked going to the youth club. In the 1970's it was table tennis, discos occasionally, playing records, darts, board games, draughts and chess. We had the whole building to ourselves, opposite Parkside School, with snacks and drinks served as well. I had a boyfriend, and his mates and I, we all used to hang about town. For a while Elsie and Sheila Shipton were giving out tracts with Bible verses to read.

Then we got invited to a Gospel Rally at the Town Hall. We all went out of curiosity, but it was there that I heard the message about Jesus dying for ME. I simply accepted the fact and believed, praying a prayer at the end.

I remembered they said they were meeting next at 21 The Green Road, the home of Reg and Irene Steele, so I went along, knocked on the door and got invited in to a Bible Study. I was young, keen and had found the truth and GOD. The services at the Pentecostal church were always one and a half hours on a Sunday morning. It was whilst I was attending the church that I met my future husband, John.

I went along regularly for seven years to most meetings. John converted a Ford Transit van into a minibus, and at one stage we had 34 children in Sunday School, all off the Park Estate.

After two years of attending, I was baptized by Pastor Philip Gray, along with John and Ruth (Durose). I started searching for the Holy Spirit. I read all of my Bible, then the New Testament three times, plus other books. At that time, I often played piano when asked.

Then, one Thursday night, we were all in the back room having a prayer meeting. I remember healing was mentioned that night, and I can still remember all the people there. I went home, made myself a cup of cocoa, and went to bed. I shared a bedroom with my sister Val: 2 single beds.

As soon as my head touched the pillow, it felt like water going from the top of my head, right down to my toes. I just lay there thinking I've found Jesus, the Living Water, and the Holy Spirit, and I felt really clean inside. I told someone at church and they said it was an anointing experience. I remember having tremendous peace in my younger years.

Unfortunately, the next pastor, I didn't like, I felt I couldn't put down my roots anymore, that things were way over the top. I was disillusioned and, aged 23 years, I came away. Then I was out of the church for 19 years - my wilderness experience. During this time, our two children were baptised at the Methodist Church.

At the age of 29, I had a nervous breakdown, and was in and out of hospital for about a year. Sheila Stafford (nee Shipton) was baking pies for John. I suppose a lot of people didn't understand about mental illness in those days, but today we are a lot more informed, as it affects one in four people at some time during their lifetime. During my time away from the church, a close friend drowned on holiday, another friend hung herself, and the following year my father-in-law had a heart attack and died.

I came back to the Methodists, wanting a set service, nothing happening out of the blue. I was 42 years old and Rev Chris Eddy was in charge as minister.

A friend in the street was diagnosed with terminal cancer. She said "God is bigger than any problem". She also said she spoke in tongues, but that she was making it all up. She was completely open about it. I told her she had no need to do that, because God is real, and I told her about my experience years ago. She was thrilled to bits. She only requested a small wooden cross at her grave, and the lady who said it was an anointing experience is buried next to her. She was so kind to her in her last months.

I believe God has called me back to the church for a reason. I need to feel fulfilled with my talent of music on the piano, and encouraging people along. I believe the prayer meeting is the hub of the church and the most important service.

Love is stronger than death. If we search for God, we do find HIM. I am totally serious about GOD, JESUS and the HOLY SPIRIT. I do like FUN too.

*Kath Brown x*

# Mission Matters for Prayer

*"I call on you, my God, for you will answer me; turn your ear to me and hear my prayer" Psalm 17 v 6*

Please continue to pray for issues in past editions as God leads you. Please also use the Methodist Prayer Handbook. Thanks to those who contributed items. You may also find the Spirit prompts you to pray for a partner in a way not mentioned here - do so! Numbers help select an item to pray for, e.g. pray for "2" on 2nd, 12th, 22nd of the month.

See websites for further information.

For paper copies see Mission board in AMC vestibule.

## 1. Phakamisa, S Africa

[www.phakamisa.org](http://www.phakamisa.org)

Thokozani writes:

"I'm sorry for not responding earlier. I had an eye operation last week and was discharged on Thursday. Please remember us in your prayers:

- Some of the staff are not well, including myself - we need prayers for our health and for our families as well
- Our gogoz are faced with orphans who are drug addicts. There's this drug called whoongha and it's cheap. Most of the youth use it as it is easy to access. The problem with this drug when used is they steal from the community and from their families. Most of the gogoz can't leave their house because these orphans steal everything in the house.
- We thank God because Phakamisa is still operating, but funding is still the problem. Please continue praying for us.
- We need more rain as well, as our crops are getting more dry in our gardens.
- Many families are faced by poverty and at Phakamisa we don't have enough to assist them.
- We are planning to introduce new programs in the next term, we need prayers for God's wisdom.

Thanks for always thinking of us. Love and miss you ❤️"

## **2. Christian Aid**

[www.christianaid.org.uk/resources/churches/prayer/prayer-diary.aspx](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/resources/churches/prayer/prayer-diary.aspx)

Everyone is equal in the sight of God. Yet we live in a world where poverty still persists. Poverty is an outrage against humanity. It robs people of their dignity and lets injustice thrive. But together we have the power to transform lives.

For over 70 years, Christian Aid has been standing with the poorest of our neighbours. We work in 37 countries, with people of all faiths and none, to stand up for dignity, equality and justice.

Together we can create a world where everyone can live a full life, free from poverty. Our voices and actions are stronger together - and with your help, we can make an even bigger difference.

Ashbourne Churches Together have been supporting Christian Aid for many years, through a cake stall at the Tissington Well Dressings and a door-to-door collection during Christian Aid Week (see page 15).

## **3. Mambabu, Kailahun District, Sierra Leone**

[www.thepatrioticvanguard.com/kailahun-district-takes-the-lead-in-reducing-maternal-and-child-mortality](http://www.thepatrioticvanguard.com/kailahun-district-takes-the-lead-in-reducing-maternal-and-child-mortality)

We continue to thank God for the Mambabu programme and for its life-changing work amongst the village people of Gbangbama, Bendekor and Gbandama.

We thank God that recent developments have all been made possible through the generosity of supporters and the hard work of local people – the equipping of the community library with school curriculum textbooks and the fitting of solar panels on the roof of the community centre.

We pray for God's blessing on the building of a new road from Bendekor to Nyandehun – an ambitious project placing heavy demands on local people, as they commit their time and energies to prepare a navigable track through the bush and forest at the foot of the mountain, Mamba. We thank God for the spirit of cooperation shared with the people of Nyandehun, and for the physical strength, teamwork and perseverance of the workers who are achieving so much with the most basic of tools.

We pray for Sahr Kofi and his family, whose house was destroyed by fire with the loss of all their possessions, as they work to rebuild their home and their lives.

Lastly, we thank God for answering the prayers of many for the healing of Rachael, wife of Matthew, the founder of Mambabu and the project leader, who has passed through a time of serious illness and is now recovering with the support of her family. We continue to pray for her during a time of convalescence and also for Matthew and their children.

#### **4. Open the Book**

[www.biblesociety.org.uk/get-involved/open-the-book/](http://www.biblesociety.org.uk/get-involved/open-the-book/)

We thank God for:-

- the new Area Training Officers, some of whom are volunteers
- two new recruits joining our local teams
- children asking questions about God.

We pray for:-

- more help to cover holidays and sickness in local teams
- more Open the Book teams to visit schools who request them
- God's guidance in all our storytelling opportunities.

#### **5. ACE Youth Trust**

[www.aceyouth.org.uk/?LMCL=gub2dB](http://www.aceyouth.org.uk/?LMCL=gub2dB)

We continue to thank God for the work of ACE and that young lives are being changed through the care and support of ACE volunteers and staff. We pray for God's continued blessing upon this work.

We thank God for the dedication and enthusiasm of all who work with ACE committing their skills, experience and time to help the disadvantaged young people of our community, and we pray that God will continue to call, inspire and equip such people in this service. We thank God too for the generosity of those who contribute much-needed funds to enable the work to continue.

We also pray for the young people themselves – holding before God all those struggling with loneliness, bullying, disability, mental illness; those in trouble at school or with the police; those with no loving home or family support; those in despair who see no future; those overstretched by their circumstances.

"Father God, bless our young people, we pray, and use us to show them your love."

## **6. Methodist Homes (MHA)**

[www.mha.org.uk/about-mha/chaplaincy-and-spirituality/](http://www.mha.org.uk/about-mha/chaplaincy-and-spirituality/)  
see also *Heart and Soul Magazine*.

- Pray for MHA as it goes through a number of changes.
- Pray for MHA Sunday in our church and Circuit, currently planned for 5th July. Pray for the preacher on the day, Caroline Dobinson, an MHA Chaplain, who will be leading the service at Ashbourne.

## **7. The Derbyshire Agricultural Chaplaincy**

[www.ruralactionderbyshire.org.uk/](http://www.ruralactionderbyshire.org.uk/)

The DAC is finding a significant increase in calls for support. There have been three suicides in the farming community in recent months and the DAC has been in contact with all three families to some extent.

TB is another major concern in Derbyshire causing significant distress to farmers. We also met with Bishop Libby in December and discussed the recommendations in the report.

Total of 67 contacts, including eight farmers supported by the FST.

Stella has taken several funerals, preached at the Hope Church Plough Sunday, attended the licensing of their new vicar, and offered ongoing support to a number of farmers.

14 of all the contacts have been telephone conversations, and 17 are new referrals.

The DAC have officiated at seven funerals (including the most recent suicide) and have two weddings in the diary.

*Richard Odell, World Mission Secretary*  
March 2020 [richard@richardodell.co.uk](mailto:richard@richardodell.co.uk)

## Tissington Well Dressings

Thursday 21st May – Monday 25th May



We have a great opportunity to raise extra money for Christian Aid this year, as our cake stall will run from Thursday to Bank Holiday Monday. We should raise over £1000, but we will need your help.

We need slices of cake to sell to the visitors, between 200 and 300 slices each day. It would be helpful if cakes and tray bakes were not cut up in advance, then we can ensure consistency in size of portions. We also need help staffing the stall which is great fun. No previous experience necessary.

### **PLEASE CAN YOU HELP?**

Please consider carefully and prayerfully whether you could spare a couple of hours to help.

After Easter there will be lists in the various churches for staffing the stall and for providing cakes. Please try and help this very worthwhile event.

John Hurfurt tel 342859 email [jandehurfurt@supanet.com](mailto:jandehurfurt@supanet.com)

Stuart Green tel 300338 [stuart@greenofashbourne.plus.com](mailto:stuart@greenofashbourne.plus.com)

We also need door-to-door collectors for Christian Aid week which is 12-18 May. Some people find this task easy and enjoy meeting people who have their envelope ready and are grateful for the opportunity to give. Others find it more difficult but go out of their comfort zone to do it. We generally raise around £2,000 which is more than we could raise from any other event, so it's well worth it.

If you feel you can help please speak to Catherine Green:  
07531 655998 [catherine@greenofashbourne.plus.com](mailto:catherine@greenofashbourne.plus.com)

**STOP PRESS: WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO GO AHEAD WITH DOOR-TO-DOOR COLLECTIONS THIS YEAR. THIS WILL HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON CHRISTIAN AID'S FINANCES, SO WE WILL BE THINKING OF OTHER WAYS TO SUPPORT THEIR WORK.**

## Church with Choices!



At our 10.30 services in Ashbourne, we currently start off together in the church for the first 20 minutes, and then divide into two groups based on age. The adults stay in the church and the young people move to other rooms, so that each group can worship and learn in a way which is appropriate for them.

'Church with Choices' takes this idea forward. We still start together, but then get the choice of how to continue our worship in different styles or formats. So far, this has included listening to a sermon, singing, meditation, discussion, creative activities and even cooking. Everyone gets a choice regardless of their age, and they can decide on the day, depending on how they're feeling and what would help them to worship God that day.

Following feedback from the three trial 'Church with Choices' services, the Church Council has agreed that this format works well for us at Ashbourne Methodist Church, and is a good format for All Age Services.

We'll therefore do 'Church with Choices' whenever there is a 5th Sunday in the month (when all age services are planned). The major festivals (which are also All Age) will continue to follow a more traditional format, with everyone staying in the main church throughout. We hope this format will work even better when the Link building project is completed, and we have more suitable sized rooms and movement within the church buildings is easier.

*Catherine Green, on behalf of the Worship Coordination Team*

## THREE QUESTIONS

1. If everyone in my church were just like me, what kind of church would my church be?
2. Would that kind of church be the church I really want to belong to?
3. Would that kind of church attract those who don't currently attend?

*Contributed by Lorraine Hawkins*



## **Green Box - Reduce, Reduce.....!**

Conversations with friends and Coffee Shop customers have prompted me to write about the dreaded plastic again! And this article is an amalgam of thoughts from all these people.

We know that we produce far more plastic waste than can be recycled in this country. It used to go to China and other Far Eastern countries, but that is now banned by China, and some others, as the volume was overwhelming. Much ended up in the oceans, the sight of which is unbearable.

The percentage of our plastic which is actually recycled is about 20%. There are plants in this country (Materials Recovery Facilities!) which are working hard to move towards coping with the volume of material we send for recycling, but they need our help.

And this means REDUCE! So here are some ideas:

- Buy Tomato Ketchup and HP Sauce only in glass bottles. The same goes for Salad Cream and Mayonnaise.
- Use bars of soap instead of liquid soap with a dispenser.
- Refill bottles of washing up liquid, laundry liquid, surface cleaners etc (*see the February edition*).

Please, please, if you have more ideas about how to reduce our single plastic usage, do let me know, or put a few sentences in the weekly newsletter yourself.

We are the ones to make changes, out of common sense and out of love for God's wonderful earth.

*Pat Fielding*



## **Methodist Women in Britain**

Willersley Week, which was to have been held in March, has now been postponed until September. The new dates are 7-10 September and the Leader will still be Mrs Anne Browse. We hope this will be able to go ahead then. Do make a note of the date in your diary.

Other events are cancelled until further notice. The following had been planned: Saturday 2nd May: Quiet Day at Tislington, led by Fiona Green, Wednesday 13th May: District event at Willersley, with Rev David Leese

*Alma Swan (347586)*

## “God in Love Unites Us” – summary of feedback

In February, two meetings were arranged by the Ashbourne Circuit to discuss the report considered last July by the Methodist Conference, regarding “Marriage and Relationships”. These meetings were attended by about 70 people in total.

At the end of these meetings, each participant was given a feedback sheet on which to record their reactions. This included ten statements, about which people were asked to indicate their view by ticking the appropriate box as follows:

**1= agree strongly, 2= agree slightly, 3=neutral, 4=disagree slightly, 5=disagree strongly**

A total of 62 forms were returned. The following table shows:

- how many people ticked each box for each statement
- the percentage of people agreeing (strongly or slightly) with each statement

Statement	Number of scores					
	1	2	3	4	5	
1. The Methodist Church should develop services for use at the ending of a marriage.	3	8	15	10	26	<b>18%</b>
2. The Methodist Church should develop services for celebrating all civil partnerships, similar to those which already exist for mixed-sex couples who have entered marriage in a civil ceremony.	23	16	8	1	11	<b>66%</b>
3. Marriage can be between any two people.	25	10	11	3	13	<b>56%</b>
4. Marriage should only be between a man and a woman.	18	5	7	8	24	<b>37%</b>
5. The Methodist Church should affirm both these understandings (3 and 4), respecting contradictory convictions in the Church.	23	9	13	5	10	<b>53%</b>
6. Provision should be made for same-sex couples to be married on Methodist premises.	26	10	8	3	15	<b>58%</b>

Statement	Number of scores					
	1	2	3	4	5	
7. A minister should not be forced to conduct a same-sex marriage.	49	5	1	0	6	<b>89%</b>
8. A minister who is unwilling to conduct a same-sex marriage should be required to refer any couple requesting it to a colleague who could.	36	15	4	0	5	<b>85%</b>
9. If it is decided that same-sex marriage will be permitted in the Methodist Church, the decision whether or not to register an individual church for same-sex marriage should be taken by its Church Council.	33	9	9	3	6	<b>70%</b>
10. The resources produced by the Methodist Church to support marriage should be reviewed to take account of the contemporary realities described in the report.	34	11	6	2	8	<b>74%</b>

A copy of this summary has been given to members of the Circuit who will attend the District Synod when this issue is to be considered.

The facilitators of each discussion group at the two meetings made some brief notes regarding the range of views expressed. Copies of these notes will also be provided to those attending Synod.

*This data was compiled by John Dyster and independently examined by Paul Haslam.*

## Cliff Festival 2020

It's been a challenging time at Cliff, as it has for many others, as we have wrestled with the advice from the government, the Methodist Church and others, which has led us to the difficult decision to close the College on Friday 20 March.



One of the many consequences of this decision is that we have also had to cancel Cliff Festival, which is really disappointing for us and many others, but we do want to provide an inspirational experience over the weekend and plans are beginning to emerge. Here is the statement from the College:

“It is with regret that, due to the developing situation with COVID-19 and following government advice, we will no longer be holding Cliff Festival 2020. This will be the first time since World War II that Festival has not taken place, and we know this will be disappointing for many of you who were planning to join us for Festival. This has been a difficult decision for the Festival Committee to make.

Instead, over Festival weekend, we will be hosting a free-to-access ‘Festival at Home’ to make sure that you, your family and your church can still be blessed, challenged and equipped to serve God in His world. This will include online content and conversation as well as materials for those who prefer offline and non-digital content. We hope you will join with us for this time of celebration.”

‘Festival at Home’ is a collaboration between Cliff College, the Methodist Church and All We Can and will be a truly global experience. Over the weekend each day will include:

- Bible Study, led by Revd Shane Bishop, live from Illinois, USA
- Children’s activities, live From Cliff College
- Workshops, led by friends from the UK and across the world
- Worship, live from Cliff College
- Music, live from King Street Studios, Stoke-on-Trent

All of this will be available on the Cliff College website, and other social media platforms, but we are also working to produce some printed material for those who would prefer it. We have a lot of work to do and much of this is only in the planning stage, but I’ll share more in next month’s Connections.

Please remember us in your prayers as we put together this exciting event which we hope will be a blessing, challenging and equipping in these difficult times.

Thanks

*Paul Taylor*

## **World Day of Prayer**

This was previously known as the Women's World Day of Prayer, and was held this year in Ashbourne Methodist Church on Friday 6th March. The service was written and themed by the Women of Zimbabwe entitled 'Rise! Take your Mat and Walk'. Don, our organist, had adjusted tunes to enable the service to be followed as printed and several members partook with leading, prayers and readings.

The booklet available for the service included information on the background of Zimbabwe: its flag, population, geography, history, women, education, children and religion, and how since 1962, when the first interdenominational prayer meetings were arranged, the country has joined the world in prayer.

Please visit if you are able [www.wwdp.org.uk](http://www.wwdp.org.uk) to see the many grants made from the collections and Gift Aid received on the day.

Next year, on 5th March 2021, the service will follow the format put together by the people of Vanuatu entitled 'Built on a Strong Foundation'

*Sandra Lewer*

## **Milldale**

Traditionally, on Holy Saturday - the day between Good Friday and Easter Sunday - the Circuit arranges a walk from the public car park in Milldale for about two hours, with a packed lunch during, or at the end of, the walk. This is followed by a short service in the Chapel at 2 p.m. People not wishing to walk are very welcome to just attend the service.

Regrettably, in present circumstances it has become necessary to cancel the event for this year.

*Sandra Lewer*

## **Ashbourne is Open!**

Hours and delivery information for a selection of Ashbourne retailers

Source: Facebook (at March 2020)

### **A.L.Hulme, Fishmonger - 26 Church Street DE6 1AE**

**01335 342141**

We are open and our hours are as normal. We can be contacted via Facebook or phone.

### **Ashbourne Bakehouse, Bakery - 29 Marketplace Ashbourne**

**01335 347206**

Open: Tue-Fri 8am-4pm, Sat 8am-2:30pm. Free deliveries in 5 mile radius of Ashbourne, Order by 2pm for next day delivery, payment by BACS or over the phone

### **Fresh Choice, Greengrocer – 22 St John St, DE6 1GH**

**01335 300850 or 07916142050**

Please leave a voicemail or text if Bob does not answer.

Open: Mon-Sat 7am-5pm. Call or email [pinder-dayal@hotmail.com](mailto:pinder-dayal@hotmail.com) for delivery information or to place order.

Please place orders before 2pm for next day delivery.

### **Nigel's Butchers – 21 Dig St, DE6 1GF**

**01335 342073**

Open: Mon-Fri 7.30am- 5pm, Sat: 7.30am-4.30pm, Sun: Closed  
Delivery or collection available. Payment via cash, card or BACS Transfer  
Website: [www.nigelsbutchers.co.uk](http://www.nigelsbutchers.co.uk)

### **Marks Family Butchers – 50 St John St, DE6 1GH**

**01335 300175 or 07973 114378**

Open: Mon & Sat 7:30-4pm, Tues, Thu & Fri 7:30–5pm, Wed 7:30-1pm.  
Telephone orders welcome, payment by cash or bank transfer

### **Natural Choice, Health Food – 24 St John Street DE6 1GH,**

**01335 346096**

Orders taken by phone or email [naturalchoice@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:naturalchoice@tiscali.co.uk)

Order by 3pm for next day delivery, payment by card over the phone

## Dear readers

Thank you all for your contributions. As church services are currently suspended, special arrangements have been put in place for the distribution of this edition. It is available on the Ashbourne Methodist website as usual, but paper copies will be sent or delivered to those who we know do not use computers. A limited number of paper copies will be available at Ashbourne Methodist Church for collection.

If you are interested in printing your own paper copy in the normal format, please let us know and we will make arrangements for you to do so (it works best if your printer can print double sided).

We intend to keep publishing and similar arrangements will be made for as long as necessary. We welcome contributions from all our readers – please let us know about your experiences and the thoughts which come to you as you have more time to reflect than is usually the case!

If you have an idea but are not sure whether it is suitable, give us a ring and we will be happy to discuss it with you.

If you have any photos suitable for the magazine, please e-mail them to us – they can either illustrate the text (in black and white) or feature in colour on the cover.

### Next edition

Please send us items for the next edition **May 2020**, including photos. We are unable to include items which are copyright unless permission is obtained from the copyright-holder.

Last date for contributions: **Wednesday 15th April**

Publication date: **Sunday 26th April**

If possible, please e-mail your items to us at [dysters@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:dysters@tiscali.co.uk)

If this is not convenient, please contact us on 01335 344086

*The editors: Daphne and John Dyster*

**Keep in touch by visiting the  
website for up-to-date news:**

**[www.ashbournemethodist.org.uk](http://www.ashbournemethodist.org.uk)**

