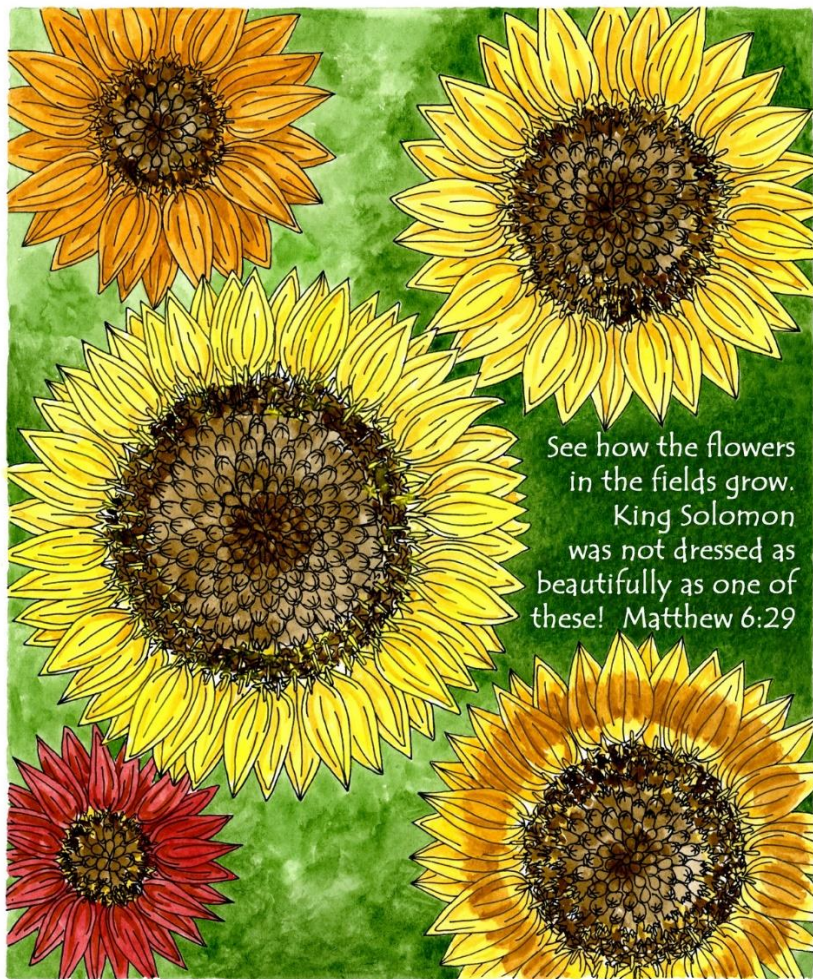


Connections



See how the flowers
in the fields grow.
King Solomon
was not dressed as
beautifully as one of
these! Matthew 6:29



Ashbourne Methodist Circuit
Magazine July/August 2020

Letter from the Minister

The Manse, 16 Booth Drive
Ashbourne, Derbyshire DE6 1SZ
Tel: 01335 342408
email: tim.morris@methodist.org.uk

Dear Friends,

“It’s life Jim, but not as we know it”

I heard the story, probably a joke (!), that someone rang their local B&Q store the other day, wanting to check on social distancing arrangements:

Caller: How big is the queue?

Assistant: Last time I looked sir, it was as big as the B.

The B&Q logo, consisting of the letters 'B&Q' in a bold, white, sans-serif font, set against a bright orange square background.

Misunderstandings, people doing things in different ways, not understanding the new protocols - these and many others are all taking place at an alarming rate.

Life is quite different for most of us at the moment in different ways. And it’s going to be for some time to come, so we better get used to it! We may hope things will return to normal soon. Unfortunately, or fortunately, depending on your viewpoint, there’s going to be a new normal. In lots of ways, the old normal will not be returning any time soon, indeed it most likely won’t. We don’t actually know how and when things will settle down and in what ways they will land.

We are looking at ways in which we can safely and gradually reopen some of our places of worship. However we come from a tradition where, although we value our building and place of worship, a place which holds memories, experiences, joys and sorrows, a place we cherish and share together in deep communion - Church is the people! How many times have we said that.



And what an amazing job many have been able to do in their life of worship, witness and work beyond the bricks and mortar of our churches. Serving others, going the extra mile, praying, baking, shopping, banking, collecting prescriptions. You can add many more!

Those things and more will need to go on being done for well into the foreseeable future, and probably beyond. They will change – some will decline, others will grow. But it is all change!!

I hope and pray that you will be a part of shaping the new normal, embracing the change and all the while remembering that Jesus Christ is the same: yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8).

Your minister and friend,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom Morris". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Ashbourne Church Family News

"...but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." Isaiah 40:31

Our love and prayers are with Pat Simpson and family and the Danish family of Jorgen Boll at his passing, and with Kath Brown on the death of her father.

There are a number waiting for hospital appointments, tests, results or treatment, slowed down by the current situation. As we pray for each other, let's remember David Franklin, Barbara Hollands, Jenny Waring, and Sally Wall (at Ashbourne Lodge) and others you know who may not be well, along with those who care in one way or another. We can thank the Lord that Carole Thorpe has completed her treatment for now. Let's keep remembering all those at work who have an extra load as they follow government guidelines to keep us all safe. A number now are feeling the isolation of only being able to be in their own homes and with no one with whom to communicate face to face, and others have extra stresses because more adults or children are at home most of the day. Keep up the phone calls, as hearing a voice is important for those who are alone.

Congratulations to Eric and Jenny Williams as they celebrate their Golden Wedding Anniversary on 25 July, to Jo and Paul Taylor on the birth of their first grandchild Elizabeth Lily on 2 June, and to Margaret and David Heaton on the birth of their granddaughter Esther Joy on 10 June. Congratulations too to Sam Glossop as he will be a head boy at QEGS in his last year at school.

Over the summer some of our young people will move on in education. Beth Peers waits for A level results before University, Lucy Hibberd, with a Diploma in Dairying, is in full time work and Molly Dawson, with a Diploma in Child Care, hopes to work as a nursery practitioner. Thomas Haines and Jacob Morris await GCSE results. Other young people

continue in education. Josh Dutton has completed his second year studying Sports and Exercise Psychology, Andrew Sales will complete his Masters and commence work in September as a Graduate Development Planner, Emily Dutton continues with her Masters in Occupational Therapy, while Rachel Sales continues her PhD in Maths. Last month I mentioned those who will move up to Secondary School in September.

Welcome to Anne Wareing who has returned to Ashbourne and to Sarah and David Sheffield who have joined us recently.

Although there is no prayer in the vestry on a Thursday morning, we are encouraged to take time to pray, not only for our church family matters but for national and world issues. Let's be reminded by the verse at the top that when our hope is in God, he will renew our strength. As we see and hear the world news each day and the distress in many nations, let's turn those issues into fuel for prayer.

Currently Ruth Barratt, Chaplain to Businesses in Ashbourne, and Elizabeth Spencer, part of the Chaplaincy team at the Royal Derby Hospital, are not able to work in those places, but Ruth is still chaplain one day per week at a GP Practice in Ilkeston. She is considering how she can take the work forward in Ashbourne.

If you have specific matters you would like to share with someone for prayer, contact Rev Tim, myself, your pastoral visitor or housegroup.

Joyce Odell Pastoral Secretary 17.06.2020

Blessings

During April and May, the Monday evening housegroup were studying the Beatitudes and it got me thinking about my blessings. Since my treatment started at the end of December I have been surrounded by the love of my church fellowship.

Until lockdown started, meals arrived twice a week for Dad and myself to save me cooking when I was not up to it. Not just from my own housegroup, but from members of the Thursday evening group as well. Lots of cards kept dropping through my letterbox with encouraging comments. Some people phoned or emailed to see how I was, or visited me when I was in hospital. I know that I was being upheld in prayer by many within the congregation.

Since lockdown, I have been ferried to the hospital, had my lawns cut and shopping done for me. Each week, Sunday lunch has been cooked for us.

For all of this I am extremely grateful.

My treatment is now complete and I will be having a scan in mid July to see how it has gone.

Please accept my heartfelt thanks, as I know how blessed I have been during this time. Thank you.

Carole Thorpe

A Stairway from Heaven?

Based on a reflection on the life of Jacob (of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob fame)

This is a short article to say “thank you” to our very kind friends of the Ashbourne Methodist Circuit who sent us their love and prayers over such a long period, when we have had one grandson (aged 3) needing chemotherapy, and experienced the loss of a new-born (at 16 days), the first child of another son and his new wife.

I have a vivid imagination and God inspires us often, through his power in creation, the kindness of people, and the living truth of his word in the Bible.

The story of Jacob began to live for me as God revealed himself through a wonderful dream and Jacob saw a stairway (a ladder) reaching up to heaven; the Lord was at the top of it and his angels (messengers) were ascending and descending to earth. The Lord promised to be with Jacob, and protect and guide him in the future, as he was escaping from his vengeful brother. When Jacob awoke from his dream, he observed: “How awesome! God is in this place and I was unaware of it!”

Our experience during this period was such a supportive outpouring of love and prayers (from inside and outside our churches). I believe it is still on-going, despite Covid-19 difficulties too.

In my mind’s eye, I sensed often we were spiritually in God’s house, although I did not visualise the ladder (or even an angel or two!) yet God was very near. Also I found that requests in prayer for others seemed to have “special wings” and I knew that they were being heard!

It is true that we are enfolded by God’s love through the heart-felt prayers of others.

Cherry and I have been humbled by the kindness and love of others.

Mike Dennison

Christine Lemon

Christine was born in 1946 and lived all her life at Alkmonton House Farm. She was the daughter of Fred and Joan Lemon. He was a well-known local preacher in the Ashbourne circuit and beyond. The Lemon family were members at Cubley Methodist Chapel until it closed, and they then transferred their membership to Brailsford Chapel where Christine was secretary for many years.

Christine worked at Longford shop as well as milk recording on local farms and delivering the family farm milk. She was always there for Ian (her brother) and Janet and their children, and maintained an interest in the farm. Christine enjoyed holidays with Glovers Coaches and went to Norway and Switzerland. Holidays were also taken with friends and with Elizabeth Spencer, her cousin. She visited her cousins in Yorkshire each year.

Development of arthritis in her early 50s restricted Christine's way of life but she was able to go to Derby on the bus and was met there by someone from Shop Mobility. It was there she met Rev Graham Maskery, who became a good friend, was understanding and supportive and he took the funeral service at Alkmonton on 24 April.

Christine had a deep faith in Jesus and, along with like-minded young people, went to bible studies and barn meetings at the Lowes' farm in Beresford Dale in the late 60s and early 70s, through which she and others grew in their faith. Lasting friendships were made there. Christine appreciated her long friendship with Sister Merle, who often rang her and prayed with her over the phone.

There will be a service of thanksgiving when this is possible.

Based on information from family and friends.



Christian Aid Week

A huge thank you to everyone who took part in Christian Aid week this year. We thought we needed to scale back our ambition as we couldn't do all of our normal events, so set ourselves a target of £1,500, which we thought would be a stretch. We normally raise around £3,200. But after a fun quiz night, and the amazing effort of you all, we raised an amazing £6,102.52 plus over £1,000 of Gift Aid!

I had a zoom call with Katy McCabe of Christian Aid a few weeks ago, where I handed over a virtual cheque and told her what we'd been up to. I also passed on our good wishes for the ongoing work of Christian Aid and assured her of our prayers. Please continue to pray for Christian Aid's work, especially for those around the world who are just starting to see the effects of the coronavirus and face it without the infrastructure and wealth that we have here.

Catherine Green



“Pointless” Quiz Evening

Join us for a fun quiz night at 7.00pm on Saturday 11th July, themed on the TV show “Pointless”. Please will you come along?

Everyone is welcome to join in, and teams will be formed on the night so individuals can take part.

To register for the quiz, which will take place on Zoom, please contact Stuart Green on 01335 300338.



Cliff Festival at Home

Festival at Home at Cliff College, over the bank holiday weekend, was a great success with over 4,000 people engaging with a range of worship, workshops, Bible study and fun. It was very strange to be at Cliff

with so few people, but it was exciting to see what could be achieved online and how people joined in at home – some who pitched their tent in the garden and spent the weekend camping whilst joining in with the Festival.

If you missed the opportunity to join in then you still have the chance to explore over 150 videos that are still available on the College website at www.cliffcollege.ac.uk/cliff-festival/festival-2020. But as there's so much choice, here's three recommendations:

Celebration | Friday Evening

Ashley Cooper, College Principal, preached an inspiring sermon that explored the Jerusalem of Acts and reflected on what it means for the local church to be rooted in a global vision. He challenged the church of today to be different and to learn from how the world has responded to the current situation.

Bible Study | Saturday, Sunday and Monday morning

Revd Shane Bishop, the minister at Christ Church, Illinois, led a challenging series of Bible studies: beginning with the resurrection and how no-one saw it coming, yet it changed everything; followed with the power of revelation and how the resurrection becomes more real as we recognise Christ; and finally, how we are empowered by the resurrection to take the good news to all the world.

Almighty Pod | Saturday and Sunday on the Youth & Adult playlist

The Almighty Pod is a weekly podcast produced by three lads from Stoke who incorporate their enthusiasm for the funny side of life, their love of sport, and football in particular, and their love of Jesus. It offers young people a very different and challenging way of engaging with faith.

We are now planning for Festival 2021, where we will be exploring the theme 'Around the Campfire' – a place to gather and share stories. Bookings are now open so why not join us next year and be inspired by the stories of others and take the opportunity to share your story.

Paul Taylor

MISSION MATTERS: ACE Youth Trust

Although normal ACE activities have been on hold during lockdown, ACE volunteers and staff are still at work, organising and delivering child friendly food parcels and hygiene packs to local young people in need and their families. Over 20 families, including some 39 young people, are now being helped in this way and new referrals are being received all the time. Sadly, during this period, ACE has also witnessed an increasing incidence of family breakdown, mental health issues and domestic violence.

Please pray for the volunteers and staff who are up early doing the shopping, loading trolleys, sorting and filling boxes, co-ordinating with families and making deliveries. Please also pray for those providing much needed pastoral support to families struggling to cope.

ACE has been spending about £1,200 a month on food parcels and managing cash flow has been quite a challenge. Applications are being made every week to COVID-19 grant-making bodies and some generous donations, have been received - £500 from Tesco's Bags of Help scheme, £1,000 from the Derbyshire County Council local members support fund and £1,000 from Foundation Derbyshire. ACE is also very grateful to everyone from local churches for their donations to the ACE Hardship Fund - COVID-19 project.

Socialisation is at the heart of what ACE normally does – supporting young people who have difficulty interacting with others, helping victims of bullying or ostracisation, providing opportunities for those who are isolated by their circumstances and a safe haven and respite for those trapped in dysfunctional family situations or weighed down by responsibility. For all these young people, the suspension of ACE clubs and activities due to the coronavirus lockdown restrictions has been particularly problematical. Please pray for them and for their families.

May God continue to bless the work of ACE. For some, it is their lifeline. In the words of one local resident

“Thank you for everything ACE is doing. Your help has been a godsend and ... dropping off the bags has been the highlight of the week ...I don't know what we would have done without this help as we couldn't go out and didn't know where to get help”

If you would like to support ACE's work, here are the bank details:
Account: ACE Youth Trust, A/c No: 46527575, Sort code: 60-01-19

David Bale

MISSION MATTERS: Covid-19 and Mambabu

Over the last few months we have all had cause to reflect upon the extent of our own vulnerability and to feel grateful for the essential services on which we depend, such as clean water, food, electricity, and healthcare.

The fragility of life without some of these basics has again been brought home to us recently through corresponding with our friends in the Mambabu villages in Sierra Leone. We had hoped their remote location might protect them from the effects of Covid-19, yet it seems nowhere is exempt, not even a place that found itself at the epicentre of the virulent Ebola epidemic just a few years ago.

On 12th May three women from Nyandehun, a small town not far from the villages, arrived home from the capital, Freetown, where they had travelled to sell bananas. On their return, they tested positive for the virus and were promptly confined in a makeshift isolation centre, along with fourteen others with whom they had been in contact. As an immediate precaution, an area of several square miles was quarantined. It was an anxious time. The villagers had heard all about the virus and, suddenly, there it was on their doorstep.

Equally worrying was the more insidious threat of hunger, which loomed large because quarantine in this context means having to survive on what you already have. The local food economy is shaky at the best of times and is easily destabilised by unexpected events. Food shortages and malnutrition are features of everyday life there, even without the added complications of an epidemic. At the beginning of the lockdown in the UK, the supermarkets repeatedly told us there was going to be enough food to go around, enough for everyone. For people in rural Sierra Leone and countless other poor communities throughout the developing world, there are, of course, no such reassurances. Food insecurity has been a massive problem in Sierra Leone for years.

Ranked 181st out of 189 countries in the 2019 UN Human Development Index, Sierra Leone is one of the poorest countries in the world. The World Food Programme (WFP) estimates that almost half of the population lack sufficient nutritious food to live a healthy life and this figure is proportionately higher in rural districts. The WFP has calculated that even in normal times only 4 percent of farmers in Sierra Leone produce enough rice to meet the needs of their families. What hope then for the subsistence farmers of the Mambabu villages and their families trying to survive in an epidemic?

Thankfully, Mambabu has been able to help. Despite a prohibition on travel between regions in Sierra Leone at the moment, Mambabu volunteers in Freetown were successful in obtaining a government pass, which has enabled them to make a humanitarian visit to the villages. Travelling through the night and in heavy rains, they transported a supply of face masks, medicated soap and so-called Veronica buckets for handwashing, as well as emergency food supplies – rice, salt, vegetable oil, onions and stock cubes - which were distributed amongst the villagers and shared with five other neighbouring communities. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this emergency relief through their support of the project.

As for the virus, it's still early days but at the time of writing this is a good news story. Due to the swift action of the authorities based on their experiences of Ebola, the local outbreak has been nipped in the bud, the quarantine has been relaxed, the people in the isolation centre have been released and thankfully no one in the area has died from the disease. Of course, the threat remains but the immediate crisis has been averted.

“Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.” Matthew 6 v.34

David and Judith Bale



Some of the emergency supplies being prepared for distribution in the Mambabu Community Centre.



Worship-looking ahead

Along with the rest of society we have been living under lockdown restrictions. These are set to change gradually, and, with safety first, robust procedures and due diligence, we will get to a place where we can begin to open again.

Our buildings have been looked after, being checked internally and externally. We are very grateful to all those who have done this.

A team has been appointed at Ashbourne Church to deal with how a reopening would take place, and around the Circuit we shall be helping the smaller churches to look at the procedures for allowing people to enter the buildings once more when circumstances allow.

A Circuit Plan has been prepared up to the end of August, so that, when circumstances change, services can restart without delay.

Worship at Home at 10.30am

In the meantime, we can still worship the Lord together. Every Sunday morning there is an on-line service which helps us to maintain our worship and keep in touch with one another. This can be accessed via the Circuit website: www.ashbournemethodist.org.uk

If for any reason you are unable join us at 10.30, the service is still available on-line at other times via the Circuit website.

If you'd like to hear the morning service, but don't have the facilities to do so, you can "buddy" with someone else who has and listen to it via your landline telephone. Please ring me and we'll link you up. We also produce a 'Worship at Home sheet' which follows what the online service is doing.

Until it is possible to hold services in the chapels, the on-line services will be led by the preacher planned for the morning service at Ashbourne.

Rev Tim Morris (01335 342408)

Ashbourne Circuit – POTENTIAL Church Services

Sunday 26th July

Ashbourne	10:30	Rev Tim Morris	Communion
	18:30	Diana Whitmill	
Brailsford	10:30	Paul Taylor	
Kirk Ireton	18:30	Rev Tim Morris	
Kniveton	11:00	Peter Dawson	Chapel Anniversary

Sunday 2nd August

Ashbourne	10:30	John Dyster	
	18:30	Praise – Peter Dawson	in Century Hall
Brailsford	10:30	Rev Tim Morris	United Service at Methodist
Parwich	14:30	Rev Tim Morris	Communion

Sunday 9th August

Ashbourne	9:15	Café style	in Century Hall
	10:30	Ruth Barratt	
	18:30	Ann Parkinson	
Brailsford	10:30	Tom Parkinson	
Kniveton	14:30	Lorraine Hawkins	

Wednesday 12th August

Milldale	19:00	Fiona Green/ Rev Tim Morris	Communion
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Sunday 16th August

Ashbourne	10:30	Rev Tim Morris	Communion
	18:30	Praise – Jeff Ffoulkes	in Century Hall
Brailsford	10:30	Sue Leese	All Age
Parwich	10:00	Steve Haines	United Service
Tissington	10:30	Peter Dawson	Chapel Anniversary

Sunday 23rd August

Ashbourne	10:30	Paul Taylor	
	18:30	Rev Tim Morris	Communion
Brailsford	10:30	Rev Tim Morris	Communion
Kirk Ireton	18:30	Ann Parkinson	
Kniveton	11:00	Tim Dutton	

Sunday 30th August

Ashbourne	10:30	Paul Taylor	All Age, Choices
	18:30	Fiona Green	
Brailsford	10:30	Diana Whitmill	

ASHBOURNE SHED

No doubt many people will agree that a garden shed is a great place to spend time enjoying your hobby, practising a skill or having a go at a new one, making or mending, or just having a time of relaxation, perhaps with a cup of tea. The only downside of a garden shed for many people is that it can be a bit lonely. Someone to talk to now and then as you work, to exchange ideas with, to learn from or to teach, can be very helpful and add to the enjoyment.

Ashbourne Shed was born to meet these needs, and a great deal of help and advice has been received from the UK Men's Sheds Association and from other 'Sheds'. Ashbourne Methodist Church very kindly offered the free use of the hut at the back of the church and some financial support in the form of insurance, and work began to prepare for opening the Shed and inviting people to come.

A request for tools was met beyond our wildest dreams. Hundreds of tools were offered – and collected – as people cleared out toolboxes. Some work needed to be done on the building and, as with every new venture these days, there was a mass of paperwork to be dealt with to ensure the safety of everyone who attends the Shed.

A great deal of work has been put in by a small number of people, but then of course, before we were quite ready to open, coronavirus hit us, and work had to stop.

As lockdown has been relaxed, we have been able to start working again on sorting tools and making the building ready to invite people to come along and enjoy using the Shed. When we will be able to have people in depends very much on the situation, as there is insufficient space for social distancing, and keeping tools and equipment clean between use by different people would be extremely difficult.

Looking forward to when we can finally open, we will be offering facilities for woodworking, making, repairing or re-purposing, and hopefully some other hobbies, such as painting, with help and tuition available if required. It will be necessary to become a member, and there are some rules about working practices, to ensure the safety of everyone concerned. The cost of attending will be very low, so no-one will be excluded because they can't afford it.

It is hoped that the Shed will initially be open on Monday mornings, perhaps running on into the afternoons, and later perhaps on other days as well. However, we do need some more volunteers to help with preparations for opening and also for supervising the Shed – for safeguarding reasons we need two supervisors whenever it is open.

If you would like to know more about volunteering, or about coming along to use the Shed once it is open, please contact:

Brian Hawkins (343174) or Richard Odell (419319).

Wonky fruit and vegetables

I have just tried some wonky potatoes. These have fairly recently become available in our supermarkets. They are, as the name suggests, fruit and veg which do not conform to a standard that someone has set for such things. My potatoes didn't look particularly promising and I wondered how they would taste once cooked. All I can say is they were delicious.

I was reminded of however wonky we feel on the outside - knobbly kneed, hard of hearing, too tall, too short etc, God doesn't concern himself with the outside. He is interested in the inside - our heart, soul and mind.

Moses wasn't a great public speaker, Gideon was afraid, David was his father's youngest. God looked at the inside and used them for his purposes.

So take heart if you sometimes feel a bit like a wonky potato - God can use you and equip you. You will never be a reject as far as God is concerned.

In truth, all the work that needs to be done has been done by Jesus. He did all that was required to make us right in God's sight when he gave his all on the cross.

All you need to do is accept God's free gift of a new beginning and believe that his son Jesus did this saving work on the cross for you. Insert your name here. Then, whether you have just started your journey with God, or a little along the way, God can use you however much you sometimes feel a bit like a wonky potato.

Anonymous

Are people changing?

By Stuart Green

Many of you will know that my day job is conducting market research with people about all sorts of topics. I've recently had conversations with people about how they have been working differently, shopping differently and exercising differently.

Although some things will go back to "how they used to be" after Covid, I've found it really interesting that many people want to use this opportunity to make long-lasting changes in their lives:

"Two things I've learned: be a bit more compassionate and more understanding. I think I've lacked empathy in the past, but it's actually made me realise there's so much more important things in life than getting the best wine, getting the best steaks."

"Don't take things for granted any more. We take water for granted, we take food for granted, but there's a lot of people have lost their lives in the past few weeks and months. They were there one minute and now they're gone."

"I feel like I'm spending more time with [my family] and actually communicating more because I'm not rushing about trying to work and fit everything in as well."

"The air is so clean that it is really noticeable... Is it really necessary, to go further afield to buy food when you can get it on your doorstep?"

"Not take for granted being able to see people and actually hug them or even be in the same room."

"Be more appreciative of contact with people. I've missed giving my Dad a hug."

I'm sure many of us will have had similar thoughts and may feel that we've got a fresh perspective on life from this experience.

As things continue to change over the coming weeks and months, let's pray that God will continue to guide us and that, even during these awful times, people may be guided into better ways of relating to one another and better care for our planet.

Circuit Weekend Away

When: Friday 19th – Sunday 21st March 2021

Where: The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick

Leader: Nigel Pimlott, Learning and Development Officer for the Nottingham and Derby District. Nigel has chosen as the subject for the weekend:

“Realising God’s future when we haven’t been there before”.

Quite a mouthful, but given the present situation, when we have no idea what the future will look like, it seems particularly apt.

The Circuit Weekend Away gives us opportunities to get to know each other better, to exchange ideas, and to have fun together. Those of you who have been to previous weekends will know that the facilities at The Hayes are excellent. Everyone is welcome. Please do consider coming along.

Booking forms will be available in September.

The Circuit Leadership Team

Methodist Women in Britain Easter Offerings



Over many years, Methodist women have organised Easter Offerings in aid of the World Mission Fund.

This year because of the pandemic, it was not possible to do this, and MWiB have now decided to defer the collections until next year.

However, many grants have been sought from the World Mission Fund to help those who are really struggling at this time. They are therefore seeking contributions towards this specific work. If you feel you would like to make a contribution, please send it to –

Methodist Church World Mission Fund
Methodist Church House
25 Marylebone Road
London NW1 5JR

If possible, please state that it is for the Covid-19 Fund, and that it is from Circuit 22/11. If you prefer to give on-line, please do it through their Just Giving page.

Alma Swan

Methodist Women in Britain Nottingham and Derby District



2020 was to have been very busy for me in my role as District MWiB President. However, because of the unprecedented times in which we find ourselves, everything planned as a District event for 2020 has been cancelled - Days of Fellowship, Afternoon Tea, two July Quiet Days and an autumn District day - along with six individual groups in and around the district to which I had been invited as the speaker.

Looking forward to 2021, the future of Willersley Castle Hotel is uncertain, so even if meetings are possible an alternative venue may have to be found for the Days of Fellowship and Afternoon Tea, something which is currently being explored.

The District Committee have kept in touch with each other by phone, text and e-mail. We will endeavour to plan whatever is possible as and when restrictions are lifted and new guidelines are issued.

I have been in touch with many MWiB friends locally and connexionally and we all look forward to a time when we can again meet together other than FaceTime or Zoom.

In the meantime, we continue to enable, equip and encourage each other in whatever ways we can. Today, 16th June, I received a phone call enquiring as to whether I needed more jam jars - the result of which will be a socially distanced garden visit from a friend (plus jars!) who lives alone in a town not too far away.

So stay safe and God bless you all.

Your sister in Christ,

Sue Leese

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

www.ashbournemethodist.org.uk

MHA – it’s origins and growth

by John Dyster



In this magazine, and in the Circuit more widely, there are often references to ‘MHA’. There may be some people who know very little about this organisation or how it came into being. So I thought it might be helpful to write something about it.

Rev Walter Hall

The story starts with a Methodist minister who was working in Tottenham, London, in the 1930s. In his pastoral work, he often visited elderly ladies living in rented rooms, struggling to cope in the depression of the 1930s. Often he would hear the plea, “Please don’t send me to the Union”. The ‘Union’ was the name given to the workhouse. This was the main, and often the only, refuge for older people who had nowhere else to live. Walter Hall decided that something must be done to provide more suitable accommodation for elderly people.

In addition to being a Circuit Minister, he was also Chairman of the London North Methodist District and had an invalid wife to care for. Nevertheless, he decided that something must be done, and that he must do it. So he gathered together a group of people who were interested. Then in 1939, war broke out.

When the Methodist Conference met in 1942, the resolution which he had proposed was passed, setting up an official committee, with him as convener, to report to Conference the following year.

Methodist Homes for the Aged

At the 1943 Conference, a resolution was agreed to establish Methodist Homes for the Aged, and the committee was authorised to proceed. It is amazing that, in the midst of the Second World War, the Methodist Church should decide to launch an entirely new initiative with such ambitious objectives.

By the time of the next Conference, in 1944, the first home had been purchased, at Wallington, in Surrey, and a matron had been appointed. The first residents moved in during 1945. By 1955, there were 12 Methodist Homes, and there was a policy to provide homes in every District of the Methodist Church, throughout Great Britain.

Growth and development

In 1982, David Wigley was appointed as the new CEO of MHA. He was the son of a Methodist Minister, an Oxford graduate, and had previously worked with Proctor and Gamble in England, Italy and the United States.

When I joined the organisation in 1983, there were 35 care homes, plus four sheltered housing schemes, two of which were in Scotland. At that time, the emphasis was on developing sheltered housing. A housing association had been established for that purpose. MHA recognised that, increasingly, many older people wanted to be more independent, but still part of a community, with support available.

The 35 care homes all provided residential care, rather than nursing care. However, David soon realised there was a need to also provide for older people who needed more care, both those with physical needs and those suffering from dementia.

In 1989, MHA opened its first nursing home, at Letchworth, Herts, and its first dementia care home, at Newport Pagnell. MHA's move into dementia care was to a large extent due to David's determination. It was therefore particularly poignant that, in his later years, he suffered from Alzheimer's and moved into Maple Leaf House, the MHA dementia care home at Ripley, Derbyshire, where he died in 2015.

Move to Derby

In 1990, MHA moved its main office from London to Derby. Only seven members of staff made the move: 27 new staff were recruited and trained for the work. From a personal point of view, Daphne and I, with our two sons, moved from Guildford, in Surrey, to Ashbourne.

Christian ethos

Originally, the homes were primarily for Methodists, although people from other denominations were accepted. Similarly, many staff were Methodists. Much of the money to build the first homes came from Methodist people and Methodist funds.

Over time, both residence and employment became open to everyone, of all faiths and none. To make this clear, the organisation is now more commonly known by the initials MHA. However, the organisation is still inspired by Christian values. It places great importance on nurturing the mind, body and spirit of those they care for, regardless of faith, background or belief. Every MHA care service is supported by a dedicated Chaplain to provide a listening presence, companionship and one-to-one pastoral support.

MHA today

In October 2018, MHA celebrated its 75th Anniversary at a service in Derby Cathedral. It is the largest charity care provider in the UK, and offers some of the highest quality care, accommodation and support services for older people throughout Britain, supporting:

- 4,400 older people living in care homes, many receiving specialist dementia or nursing care
- 3,000 older people living independently in retirement living communities, with access to social and leisure facilities and flexible care when needed
- 11,100 older people living independently in their own homes with the support of Live at Home community groups across the Britain.

During the coronavirus outbreak, Sam Monaghan, the current CEO, has often been heard on radio and TV speaking about the need for PPE and testing. The BBC Newsnight programme on 3rd June was devoted to the experiences of MHA.

The role of churches and their members has been central to forming MHA and continues to support vital services that help give later life meaning and purpose. MHA relies on donations to provide community support in Live at Home schemes, a Chaplain in every residential setting, and a team of Music Therapists for people living with dementia. It owes much to volunteers – befrienders, fundraisers, drivers and many more – who enrich the care and support beyond measure.

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MHA Moorland House, Hathersage, Derbyshire, opened 1949

God created us in his own image – all of us

“How do we live out the gospel mandate by loving our neighbour as ourselves, seeing in the other that divine spark of God, that then says that every human being is worth treating with respect because to do so is to attend to God’s very self? It’s simple, but if we did that, just imagine how different the world would be... particularly if white Christians were able to believe that they themselves could make a difference in terms of being allies for racial justice.” (Professor Anthony Reddie)

I’ve just finished listening to a great conversation between five black theologians & thinkers, who were discussing Black Lives Matter and the role of the church. I hope you don’t mind a fairly quickly-written summary of some of the notes I made of important things I heard from the speakers:

- God created us in his own image – all of us (see Genesis 1:27). Black lives matter to God, but we need black lives to matter to us as well
- The case of George Floyd has helped some people to realise that there is an issue, while many black people will know that this is an issue that has been ongoing for centuries.
- The contributors were clearly scarred by the historic and ongoing violence towards them, which goes back centuries but which continues today with violence and prejudice towards black people. White supremacy is a matter of life and death for black people and in many ways, black people are living in a terrorised state.
- “Black Lives Matters” is almost a cry of lament, like the beginning of Psalm 13 “How long, Lord?”. How long must black lives be valued less than white lives?
- Black Lives Matters is the absolute bare minimum. It is simply the recognition that black people are human.
- Churches have not always been safe spaces for black people and they are not always safe spaces now.
- It is OK to feel righteous anger towards injustice. Nehemiah, hearing about the political and economic suffering of the Jewish people, prayed and fasted and heard their cries. After that, he was very angry. When we hear about injustice to others, we can pray and also feel anger about their situation.
- It is this prophetic anger that can burn away the complacent view that everything is OK in the world and that black people are happy with what is happening. Black people are not content with the many ways in which they are disadvantaged and we should be angry about this.

- Property seems to matter more than black people’s feelings. This goes back centuries to the slave trade but continues now when we prioritise things over people’s feelings.
- If we remain silent, people will assume we are content with the way things are. It was this comment, made by one of the contributors, that prompted me to write this article. I am not content with the way things are. If we read the Gospel, and Jesus’s command to love one another, I hope that you will also agree that you are not content with the way things are for many black people.
- Ultimately, white supremacy leads to emotional, spiritual and physical death for black people – which is why we must speak out against racism when we see it or hear it, especially among our friends and neighbours.
- Theology’s great sin is “silence in the face of white supremacy” (James Cone)
- ‘If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito’. We can make a difference by changing our own practice.

I hope that gives you something to think about. The full video is on YouTube and Facebook – search for “Black Lives Matter: Is the church complicit?” by Greenbelt Festival.

Stuart Green

From the editors

Thank you to all those who have contributed to this issue. The magazine is what you make it.

We welcome contributions from all our readers. If you have an idea but are not sure whether it is suitable, we will be happy to discuss it with you. We also welcome photos for the magazine.

Please send us items for the next edition: **September 2020**

We are unable to include items which are copyright unless permission is obtained from the copyright-holder.

Last date for contributions: **Wednesday 19th August**

Publication date: **Sunday 30th August**

If possible, please e-mail your items to us at dysters@tiscali.co.uk
If this is not convenient, please contact us on 01335 344086

Daphne and John Dyster



**Dennis Foster and great-grandson
under lockdown at home**



**Cecil Broadbent's 99th Birthday
10 June 2020 at MHA Morel Court**



Mullion, Cornwall – wish you were there?