

Connections



Ashbourne Methodist Church

February 2025



Dear friends in the Ashbourne Circuit and beyond

Here we are, 2025. A new year has begun, and I suspect we all have a host of different emotions as we look forward but also look back to 2024 and maybe further. I have found that it can be easy to look back, whether to yesterday, last week, last year or the last decade or three, and the emotions vary. Sometimes feelings are of regret, sometimes they are nostalgic and sometimes they are of sadness. I wonder what you think of at this point of a new year, should we be looking backwards or only forwards with great hope for all that might happen in 2025?

In Genesis we read of Lot and his family being told to flee the city of Sodom. Lot and the family were told: "Flee for your lives! Don't look back, and don't stop anywhere in the plain! Flee to the mountains or you will be swept away!" (Genesis 19:17) You will probably recall that Lot's wife chose to look back at all they were fleeing from and in verse 26 we are told she became a pillar of salt.

Please be assured I am not suggesting that if you look back to last year you will become a pillar of salt but perhaps it is an encouragement to not look back and try to live in what has passed. One of my favourite prophets is Isaiah, who wrote to the people of God in a really challenging time, but he constantly encourages them to look to the future with hope. Some of us are experiencing challenging times now and the suggestion to look forward with hope might seem a useless platitude. As we look at our own lives, the life of our community, our country and the world it can be hard to look forward with hope. The main story in the news, as I write this letter, is the devastating wildfires in Los Angeles and the stories of over 10,000 homes being burned down and daily new evacuation orders being issued. We cannot imagine what it truly feels like to be one of those affected but I am sure we will have been touched with compassion for all those who have lost their homes and all those exhausted fire-fighters. We pray for them all and hope that political leaders take seriously the climate change issues that have led to this.

The prophet Isaiah says: "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." (Isaiah 43:18-19) In the previous verses Isaiah had reminded the exiled community of what

God had done for their ancestors in the Exodus. Now he is suggesting they forget the former things and look only to the future. My own feeling is that Isaiah knows how easy it can be for human beings to get stuck in the past and when that happens it can keep us from the new thing God wants us to be a part of. God doesn't want us to forget what he has done for us and for our world in the past, but I don't believe he wants us to stay and live there.

As a Circuit we have so many opportunities in this New Year to reach out with the Good News of God to our communities. There are new things God wants us to be a part of and to be praying for. Please take a moment to remember the things God has done in your life and to give thanks for those blessings; and then take a moment in this covenant season to ask God, what next for you, our churches and our circuit. Please also take time to pray for all those who are struggling with feeling any sense of hope in their lives.

I look forward to hearing the things God shares with you as we look forward with hope into 2025.

Blessings

Nicola

ASHBOURNE CIRCUIT FAMILY NEWS

I do hope people have been able to keep safe and warm during this very cold spell. I know that some in our church family have been suffering from the flu and other Winter ailments and we all hope they are on the mend now.

The ice and snow have impacted some of our church services, but we are fortunate in Ashbourne to be able to share with the Sunday morning service online through Facebook or YouTube. Last Sunday many of us were able to share in our Covenant Service. We were blessed to have the President of the Methodist Conference, Revd Helen Cameron, preach the sermon. Our minister Revd Nicola and the Chair of the District Revd Andy Fyall both led our service. In the cold weather quite a large number of people joined with the service on line in addition to those who attended in person. It was amazing that we could all share in this together.

As a Church we continue to think and pray for all in our fellowship who are currently dealing with health issues. We particularly pray for Chris D, David and Margaret H and Jenny W. There will be others known to us privately. For those in hospital, I can share that Elizabeth Spencer is returning to her role as part of the Chaplaincy team at the Royal Derby Hospital. She is a Chaplaincy Visitor and Eucharistic Minister. If you, or someone you know, is going into hospital, or is in hospital and would like a visit from the Chaplaincy Team for whatever reason, Elizabeth can be contacted through her number in the new Church Directory.

Many of you will remember Revd Mair Bradley from her ministry in the Ashbourne area. Sadly, she passed away on 13th December and we pray for her family at this difficult time.

This month, it is also lovely to be able to share some good news. You may have already met Derek and Jean H at the Sunday morning services held at Hilltop Primary School. They have moved to Ashbourne in order to be closer to their daughter Cath P. They have quickly settled in to their new home and we welcome them into our Fellowship.

Keep me safe, my God, for in you I take refuge. (Psalms 16 v 1)

Wendy Haslam, Pastoral Secretary (13.01.25)

CREATION

After God created the earth, full and round,
He created man from the dust of the ground.

God provided everything the man would need,
From any kind of want, Adam and Eve were freed.

I gave you air to breathe, water to drink, and food to eat,
I gave you brains, says God; use them everyone to make all things neat.

They discovered from what they found, lying around,
How to clothe themselves, make tools to till the ground, [and fight].

They captured fire to warm their bones,
and used the earth itself to build their homes.

They found elements in the rocks,
To refine metals; copper, iron, tin, silver and gold,
Invented new materials; broke the mould.

'I can make a wheel and a drill',
'I can make a windmill and a watermill',
'I can make an engine',
'I can make a better engine',
'I can make an engine to swim like a fish',
'I can make an engine to fly like a bird',
'I can make a brain- and life in a glass'.

Sometime later...

'Well God, you created us from the dust of the earth and gave us a brain,
We have used your gifts for good, [and ill],
And now all things are known to us; we have no more need of you,
We can make a man from the dust of the ground'.

'Show me', says God,
[the man bends down to pick up a handful of dust],
'That is my dust', says God.

Alan Coker Mayes.

Hebrews 13

1 Stay on good terms with each other, held together by love.

2 Be ready with a meal or a bed when it's needed. Why, some have extended hospitality to angels without ever knowing it!

3 Regard prisoners as if you were in prison with them. Look on victims of abuse as if what happened to them had happened to you.

4 Honor marriage, and guard the sacredness of sexual intimacy between wife and husband. God draws a firm line against casual and illicit sex.

5 Don't be obsessed with getting more material things. Be relaxed with what you have. Since God assured us, "I'll never let you down, never walk off and leave you,"

6 we can boldly quote, God is there, ready to help; I'm fearless no matter what. Who or what can get to me?

7 Appreciate your pastoral leaders who gave you the Word of God. Take a good look at the way they live, and let their faithfulness instruct you, as well as their truthfulness. There should be a consistency that runs through us all.

8 For Jesus doesn't change - yesterday, today, tomorrow, he's always totally himself.

9 Don't be lured away from him by the latest speculations about him. The grace of Christ is the only good ground for life. Products named after Christ don't seem to do much for those who buy them.

10 The altar from which God gives us the gift of himself is not for exploitation by insiders who grab and loot.

11 In the old system, the animals are killed and the bodies disposed of outside the camp. The blood is then brought inside to the altar as a sacrifice for sin.

12 It's the same with Jesus. He was crucified outside the city gates - that is where he poured out the sacrificial blood that was brought to God's altar to cleanse his people.

13 So let's go outside, where Jesus is, where the action is - not trying to be privileged insiders, but taking our share in the abuse of Jesus.

14 This "insider world" is not our home. We have our eyes peeled for the City about to come.

15 Let's take our place outside with Jesus, no longer pouring out the sacrificial blood of animals but pouring

out sacrificial praises from our lips to God in Jesus' name.

16 Make sure you don't take things for granted and go slack in working for the common good; share what you have with others. God takes particular pleasure in acts of worship - a different kind of "sacrifice" - that take place in kitchen and workplace and on the streets.

17 Be responsive to your pastoral leaders. Listen to their counsel. They are alert to the condition of your lives and work under the strict supervision of God. Contribute to the joy of their leadership, not its drudgery. Why would you want to make things harder for them?

18 Pray for us. We have no doubts about what we're doing or why, but it's hard going and we need your prayers. All we care about is living well before God.

19 Pray that we may be together soon.

20 May God, who puts all things together, makes all things whole, Who made a lasting mark through the sacrifice of Jesus, the sacrifice of blood that sealed the eternal covenant, Who led Jesus, our Great Shepherd, up and alive from the dead,

21 Now put you together, provide you with everything you need to please him, Make us into what gives him most pleasure, by means of the sacrifice of Jesus, the Messiah. All glory to Jesus forever and always! Oh, yes, yes, yes.

Methodists for World Mission – Kenya

I was very interested to read Crispin's article about Kenya in last month's issue. Those who have joined our fellowship in the last few years may not be aware

that, in the past, this Circuit has had a very strong link with Kenya, in the person of Sister Merle Wilde (1921-2017).

It was in September 1952, at a special mission service in Kniveton Chapel, that Merle committed her life to Christ. Just six weeks later, she was called to train as a Local Preacher in the Ashbourne Circuit. Not long after that, she read in the Methodist Recorder that there was a great need for a Deacon in the Meru District of Kenya. She immediately felt she was the one who must fill that vacancy, but she resisted it because she was quite happy working with the livestock on her parents' farm.

Nevertheless, she applied and was accepted for training at the Methodist Deaconess College. They wanted her to serve in Britain, but when she insisted that she must work abroad, they wanted her to go to the Caribbean. Then suddenly there was an unexpected vacancy in the Meru District of Kenya – and she was sent to fill it. Merle served in Kenya, as a Methodist Deacon, for a total of 12 years between 1957 and 1971.

On returning to Britain, Merle worked in Notting Hill, Bristol and Coventry until she reached retirement age in 1981. But she didn't retire - she returned to the Ashbourne Circuit and continued working as a Deacon and a Local Preacher. Merle was still very active at the age of 95.

Whilst Arthur W was the editor of this magazine, Merle wrote a number of articles about her work in Kenya. Subsequently she was encouraged to write more, but somehow, she was always finding what she considered more important things to do. Eventually she was persuaded to talk into a tape recorder in order to fill the gaps. Then this was all typed up and edited into a book. Merle found some old colour photos, and a good friend with the appropriate skills drew a map, in order to illustrate the narrative.

The book 'From Kniveton to Kenya' was published by the Ashbourne Methodist Circuit in June 2016. It is an amazing story. The first printing was completely sold out. Profits from the sale were for the Methodist Church World Mission Fund. The Circuit then commissioned a second printing, and some copies remain available. If you are interested, please get in touch.

John Dyster

Do you want to be involved?

There are two initiatives that we're looking into for when our buildings reopen, and we're looking for people who are interested in joining a group to organise these. Is this something you are interested in? Do you have time or skills to help organise this? Do you think you might attend if they start, so could offer the organisers some thoughts on what might work?

Holiday at home

There are many people who have not been on holiday for a while, either because they have no-one to go with, can't afford it or like/need to sleep in their own bed! Holiday-at-home would be a partnership between existing groups supporting various health needs and elderly in the town, and would be an all-inclusive few days of holiday activities based in the church buildings, with transport to/from your house as needed.

Weekly Meal

There are currently meals organised by Elim and St Oswalds that are currently oversubscribed. There are many people in Ashbourne who are in need of a warm meal cooked for them as well friendship and conversation. This might be because they live alone, are new to the town or are just learning English. A weekly meal would aim to bring people together in our church building for both company and food.

We already have a few people who are interested in both of these, so don't feel you'll be on your own if you volunteer. Your thoughts and expertise would be greatly appreciated as we plan how to service are community when or buildings re-open. Please speak to Catherine Green 01335 300338 or catherine@birchlodge.uk

REFLECTIONS.

Looking back on the end of last year, while I enjoy the Christmas and New Year period I am always a bit apprehensive when the Christmas Card's start arriving to see if we will get a card that, for all its festive cheer, its words and the images on the front, there is a "name" missing from the signatures within it.

One can say, at the time of writing this, so far no names have been "missing", so that was a blessing.

I did have one card with a letter enclosed, from a couple living near Brighton, Robert and Angela, who were friends I met at the Leicester rugby ground, and we sat together for a number of years before they moved south, which bore sad news of family tragedy. Robert's sister and his brother in law were found dead in their home, at the time of writing they had not heard from the Coroner how they died.

Closer to home, we learned of the passing of a very close friend we have, John, who's wife, Sue, passed away. We will miss her, as I said to her husband at the funeral, "She was so well loved"! and she still will be by our family, and never be forgotten.

On another level, I was worried when nothing came, either via the post, or electronically, from relations we have from Ann's side of the family in Canada. We usually hear from them often, and were concerned when nothing arrived, but at the last minute an e mail arrived full of news from Calgary and Alberta.

One bit of news was from the other side of the Atlantic, that there was a postal dispute, and if you posted from Christmas, it will arrive, possibly ten months early in February 2025!

While we have joy and happiness, and looking toward a Happy New Year, as I write this, of which I wish for you all to carry on into and beyond 2025.

While we have no "missing names on our cards, I for one will remember those "missing" from Robert and Angela's lives, as well as Sue, and our friend John, noting them in my thoughts and prayers. Sad as I am they are no longer with us in person, I will add them to the loved ones of past times who are no longer with us. While the names maybe "missing" from cards and life, I carry the memories of them in my heart mind and thoughts where they will exist day by day and, will never be forgotten.

God Bless you all.

Tom

Parkinson.

Royal Derby Hospital

Thank you to everyone who has knitted or who is knitting prayer squares for us in Chaplaincy to give out to specific patients on the wards when we visit them.

We place the prayer square in an envelope which has a prayer printed on it which is given to the patient. I myself always pray for that patient after giving them the prayer square. They are really appreciated by the patients.

Thanks to everyone at Craft and Chat who are busy knitting away.

This is an ongoing project so if anyone wishes to knit and does not have a knitting pattern do get in touch with me and I will get one to you on 01335 348482.

Liz Spencer.

Chaplaincy.

Royal Derby Hospital.

Thank you to everyone who bought items from The Leprosy Mission Shop at Christmas. Lots of people bought Christmas cards and gifts from TLM, including...

- 790 Christmas cards
- 11 books
- 9 candles
- 7 packs of wrapping paper
- 5 food gifts

We earn a little “profit” on each item which goes towards the Link. At Christmas 2024, we raised £174.11 for The Link, bringing the total since 2017 to £1308.99.

People also made generous donations to TLM, and bought Gifts for Life which will support people affected by leprosy. These totalled £139.11 at Christmas, which is amazing.

I’ll be selling things at Easter including Easter eggs, cards and gifts, so look out for the catalogues nearer the time.

Stuart Green

Ashbourne Circuit Church Services

Please check the website for the most current information,
<https://www.ashbournemethodist.org.uk/news>.

SUNDAY JANUARY 26th

Ashbourne	10:30	Fiona Green	
	18:30	At Elim Church	ACT United Service
Brailsford	10:45	At All Saints	
Kirk Ireton	18:30	Peter Dawson	
Kniveton	11:00	Rev Nicola Briggs	Holy Communion Covenant

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 2ND

Ashbourne	10:30	Lorraine Hawkins	
	16:30	Rev David Leese	Afternoon Tea Service
Brailsford	10:30	Diana Whitmill	All Age
Parwich	14:30	John Dyster	

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 9TH

	10:00	Muddy Church	Snelston area
Ashbourne	10:30	Tim Dutton	
Brailsford	10:45	At All Saints	
Kniveton	14:30	Ruth Barratt	

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 16TH

Ashbourne	10:30	Rev Mark Broadhurst	Holy Communion
	18:30	Jeff Ffoulkes	PRAISE
Brailsford	10:30	Tracy Dawson	
Tissington	10:30	Ann Parkinson	

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 23RD

Ashbourne	10:30	Rev Nicola Briggs	
Brailsford	10:45	At All Saints	
Kirk Ireton	18:30	Rev Nicola Briggs	
Kniveton	11:00	Rev Mark Broadhurst	Holy Communion

Changes to normal services are in **bold**

Dates for your diary and your prayers

JANUARY 2025

Thu 23rd	10:00- 16:00	District Day of Reflection at Rivergreen District Hub for anyone in ministry
Fri 24th	10:00	Circuit Leadership Team meeting
Sun 26th	18:30	Week of Prayer for Christian Unity joint service at Elim Church

Wed 29th 19:30 Ashbourne Church Council

FEBRUARY

Wed 5th 12:00 ACT Prayer meeting at Elim Church

Tue 25th 14:00 Circuit Leadership Team meeting

Thu 27th 14:30 Rural Churches Gathering, Tissington

MARCH

Thu 6th 19:00 District Celebration

Sat 15th online Advanced Safeguarding Training

Wed 19th 19:30 Ashbourne Church Council

Wed 26th 19:30 Circuit Meeting at Brailsford

APRIL

Sat 5th 10:00 District Gathering including the business of Synod at Queen Elizabeth's Academy, Mansfield NG19 7AP

Wed 30th 19:30 Ashbourne Annual Church meeting

Circuit Directory and Prayer Diary

The new edition of the Circuit Directory and Prayer Diary has an omission. My email in the directory is for personal information. On the back page is the email for any Circuit work

(circuitadmin@ashbournemethodist.org.uk).

Please let me know if you find any other mistakes.
Thank you. Carole Thorpe

Connections for March

The Circuit Leadership Team have requested an earlier publication date and therefore the deadline for the March edition will be the 9th February - to clifflewer@aol.com or by hand. Thank you.

Ecclesiastes 8:15 NLT. So I recommend having fun, because there is nothing better for people in this world than to eat, drink, and enjoy life. That way they will experience some happiness along with all the hard work God gives them under the sun.

Psalms 126:2: "We were filled with laughter, and we sang for joy. And the other nations said, 'What amazing things the Lord has done for them. '"
Proverbs 15:13: "A glad heart makes a happy face; a broken heart crushes the spirit."



Reflect on Psalm 8 as you appreciate this photos



