

Ashbourne Methodist One Church Circuit

Brailsford, Kniveton, Tissington, Milldale, Kirk Ireton, Parwich,
Ashbourne



Connections November 2026



Bert – our new Lay Pastor

Dear friends in the Ashbourne One Church Circuit and further afield

On my recent annual leave, I had the opportunity to read for fun and for ministry. This was a delight. One book I read was on leadership, and it followed the story of Moses as a leader and reflected on different things to learn from his experiences.

Early on in his leadership journey (Exodus 3) we find Moses carrying out his day-to-day work. Amid the ordinary he notices something different. "There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. The Moses said, 'I must turn aside and look at this great sight and see why the bush is not burned up.'" (Exodus 3:2-3).

We see in this passage that God was present in the ordinary day to day situation, and Moses needed to take time and turn aside to notice it. I asked members of the Church Council and Circuit Meeting to spend time thinking and praying on where the burning bushes are in your life as an individual, in your church life and in the life of our circuit. It was good to hear as part of the devotions some of the thoughts of members and also to recognise as we moved through the business of the agenda, the number of burning bushes represented in the reports from our churches and our circuit forums.

I think if we were all to spend just a few minutes thinking about it, we would realise that God is present with us all the time but sometimes it needs some effort to look aside and notice. As a Circuit I think one of the burning bushes we have is our Local Lay Pastor who will be joining us in the next couple of weeks. I am pleased to say that all the pre-employment checks have been completed, and we are looking forward to welcoming 'Bert' Collinson to the Ashbourne One Church Circuit. Elsewhere in Connections you will find a letter from Bert introducing herself and a photo on the inside cover, so you know what Bert looks like. Please do pray for Bert as she adjusts to this new role and for the Circuit as we discover what God has planned for us.

Thank you to those people who have already responded in support of our pledge scheme towards the ministry of the Lay Pastor role. We are extremely grateful for each gift smaller or larger as together they will make a difference. If this is something you have not yet been able to consider, please do pray about whether you can make a pledge of a one-off amount or a regular monthly gift.

In the coming weeks I look forward to hearing about the burning bushes you have noticed. In so much of life, we are busy, busy, busy, and we fail to pause and turn aside to notice God. I take comfort from the fact that Moses regularly went to the place where the burning bush was, and we do not know if this was the first time or the umpteenth time that God had showed up. It was on this occasion that Moses did turn aside, and we could say the rest is history. Please do share the burning bushes you have noticed with one another as we all need encouraging in our daily discipleship and leadership journeys.

Blessings

Nicola

Bert's letter

Hallo Ashbourne One Church Circuit!

When God moves, He really moves!

I am so excited to be joining you and am looking forward to working out together what God has in store for us.

I'm Bert Collinson, your new Lay Pastor, (officially I'm Lynda but almost everyone knows me as Bert).

A little background:

I came to know God as a teenager, making my commitment to Him aged 15 years. He is my rock and my firm foundation. I am married to Rob, we worship at Littleover Methodist Church; we have a daughter Georgie and a son & daughter-in-law Owen & Lib. They all live & worship in Nottingham. Rob & I have a mini

small holding, with 14 sheep & 2 goats; at home we have 2 dogs. We both play in a folk-rock band. I came to Derby for university and never really left. I am an Occupational Therapist, and have been wearing my greens for 37 years, working in and around the Derbyshire Dales for the last 21 years.

This is a new post for you, and it's new to me too, so we can learn and grow together.

When I saw the job advertised for the Lay Pastor it just caught my eye, and then it caught my heart and my imagination. As I pondered and prayed about it I had a real sense of excitement and a conviction that God wanted me to apply, so I did, in faith that if I was offered the job then this is where God wants me to be, for some new adventures with Him. Every time I have quavered on this journey, God has encouraged me. I've come to my quiet times and there have been verses and passages which spoke directly into my thoughts or worries. Lots about God equipping, and Jesus speaking, it's not me, it's Him. And each time the excitement has returned. So, here I am. In the coming weeks I hope to meet you all, start to get to know you, and to build relationships upon which we can have fellowship, support each other, and reach out into the communities around us with God's hope and love. Thank you for inviting me and thank you for your welcome.

Why Bert? It's a nickname I picked up 37 years ago at university and it has stuck. I was quite a tomboy back then, and one day I was mending a washing machine in our student house, wearing my dungarees and my Granddad's flat cap, someone called me Bert the plumber... and it stuck. It's been handy over the years as there's always been lots of Lyndas, but also it's a name that I earned in a place where I felt I belonged. Belonging is so important isn't it.

I'm excited to belong in your part of God's family.

God bless.

Bert

*2 Corinthians 12:9-10; "My Grace is enough, it's all you need."
(msg)*

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

NOVEMBER 2026

As the Abba Tribute night ended the song 'Thank you for the music' belted out and I just have to say how blessed we were to hear the people aged from young to old join together in singing this famous tune. I say blessed because it was a joyous evening of entertainment which has been brought about by the hard work of so many people.

Week in and week out in our worship we are blessed too from the band, Jonathan, Kath and others who play for us, not just in Ashbourne but in our chapels too. The Psalms contain so many reference to the Lord and each of our services are filled with music to His praise. With the help of those on the PA system and the congregation singing collectively we call out to Praise Him. So 'Thank You' God for the music and those who make it happen for us in our worship.

Special days. There are birthdays to celebrate too, which again involves a song, so we join in the celebrations with saying 'Happy Birthday' to Susan P as she celebrated her 80th birthday on 12th October, Stuart G who was 50 on 29th October, also in November Jacqui M who will be 70 on the 8th and John S will celebrates his 90th on 18th November, many congratulations to you all.

The time for the harvest has given way to the glories of colour in our villages and town centre but we know that as the trees prepare for the winter so must we. We especially think of our farming community as the cost of feed, heating and diesel costs soar. Please remember them in your prayers.

To those in our churches who are newcomers 'welcome'. There are a variety of services held within the chapels and churches that make up our circuit and you are welcome to attend any. All are listed at the end of the booklet or alternatively just ask a church steward, they are always happy to help.

We bring from our weekly prayer list for your continuing prayer. Anne Wa, Chris D, Diana P, Hyacinth S-D, Kay O, Liz Hi, Margaret G, Margaret He, Margaret W, May Ha, Nina C, and Rev Nicola. *Lord of all, we thank You for Your loving care of those who need healing within our circuit. Bring Your peace to each of them.*

As the winter commences the circuit will be busy in preparations for the variety of events that are happening. Sharing the work load can be a blessing in disguise so please look out for opportunities to volunteer. There has been many friendships formed by offering a hand. I met a couple of the Ashbourne church members as they volunteered in the refreshment tent at Ashbourne show and this meeting pointed me to a loving, caring church where I now have many new friends and I finish as I started with a hymn 'What a Friend we have in Jesus'.

Maureen Vollans

(Pastoral Secretary 8.10.26)

A Meditation from the Iona Community Thanksgiving

An old woman lay dying in an Edinburgh tenement. The house was barely furnished. On the floor were strips of old lino, In her bedroom only an old chair and bed. Her husband had died an early age leaving her with a large family. She bought fish in Musselburgh to carry in a basket, the strap over her head, to sell in Edinburgh. A hard life. She kept on repeating, 'Gods' been good to me. God's been good to me.

She had taken nothing for granted.

How much have we taken for granted?

The gift of Jesus; his life of love for men and Women; His death on the cross;

His resurrection with its promise of the final victory over evil and death.

His gift of the Holy Spirit,
Enabling vision and power.

His inspiration of men and women through the Ages, who have passed on the Good News to us.

Count your blessings – name them one by one.

How much have we taken for granted?
The good things in our own lives;
The love we experienced in childhood in our homes
And from others;
The awakening of our minds by the Spirit to truth
About God and the world;
The wholeness of body and mind;
The courage to triumph over failure,
Disability and suffering.

Count your blessings – name them one by one.

How much have we taken for granted?
Our inheritance from the past;
The earth whose fertility has been increased
Through skill and work;
The infrastructure of clean water, safe drainage,
And good communications;
Building for family life, for education,
For entertainment and for work;
Knowledge about the universe and
The workings of our bodies;
Institutions which enable communal living
And foster freedom.

Count your blessings – name them one by one.

Thanksgiving and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.
Thanks to you, for gifts you have given to us. Thank
You for our friends and for our life together in the Church.
Thank you for the life here and for the hope of life to come.

Luke 17:17-18

Jesus said, 'There were ten men who were healed; where are the other nine?

Why is this foreigner the only one

Who came back to give thanks to God?

ADVENT

As we move swiftly towards Christmas. we have much to think about as we prepare during Advent.

Please pray for our Open the Book team and helpers who will be welcoming local schools for the annual nativity visits, starting on 30 November.

We will also be looking for singers to help with music in worship during our Advent themes. Please let Tim Dutton know if you are interested.

ASHBOURNE ROTARY CHRISTMAS SHOEBOX APPEAL

Ashbourne Rotary Club are again collecting shoeboxes filled with small gifts, toiletries etc for children in parts of the world where they would otherwise receive nothing at Christmas. This year's shoeboxes will again be going to Eastern Europe; Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Bosnia and Romania. We hope you take part in making Christmas special for some children in need of a smile

Shoeboxes are filled for boys or girls; age groups, 3-5, 6-11 and 12+ years with such things as toothbrushes, toothpaste, hair accessories, socks, underwear along with treats such as toys, games and sweets, together with a voluntary donation towards the cost of transport (£3.50 is suggested).

There is a display of wrapped empty shoeboxes in the entrance to The Link. Each shoebox contains a leaflet with more information. Please help yourself and return the filled shoebox to either Cornerstone Coffee House or David Neills by 21 November 2026.

Kevin Barclay

Boundaries and Bridges

On our journey through life there are likely to be many boundaries and bridges. Boundaries are important, because without boundaries we are liable to wander off course.

Without boundaries in our relationships there is likely to be little respect. Sometimes on our journey we may encounter obstacles that bring us to a standstill. Unforgiveness can be one of these obstacles. The people who hurt us most are often those closest to us, but if we refuse to forgive them it can be a real stumbling block and may affect future friendships as well as our relationship with God. Bitterness can become a permanent roadblock which prevents us from travelling any further. But we need to 'Love until it hurts' as Mother Teresa reminds us. The bible tells to 'continue to love one another, for love comes from God' (1John 4;7) Forgiveness is a decision; we can choose to forgive or not. But if we do, we offer both ourselves and our adversaries a bridge that can set both parties free. For we are warned that if we do not forgive others, we will not be forgiven! 'But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins@ (Matthew 6;14-15)

Equal and Opposite forces rule our lives,
We are drawn towards the truth
But tempted by evil.
We buckle under pressure
And snap when tensions mount.
But if God is our bridge,
Stability is assured
Because he is our load bearer
Allowing us to walk free.

We are the bridges between the old and the new
Between one generation and the next,
Drawn forever onward
Into a future embracing
Love and hope.
An eternal destiny heavenward.

Forgiveness is not an occasional act,
It is a permanent attitude.

(Martin Luther King)

Careline's Christmas Wreath-Making Workshop

Join us for a lovely festive morning, led by the very talented **Georgina Burton** who'll guide you through creating your very own Christmas wreath to take home.

- **Saturday 28th November**
- **10am–12pm**
- **The Link, Ashbourne**
- **£40 per person**

Everything you need to create your wreath will be provided, plus free tea, coffee and mince pies to enjoy while you get creative!

We're also delighted to say that this event is kindly sponsored by Natural Choice. A huge thank you to them for supporting Careline and helping us make this festive event possible!

Places are limited, so early booking is recommended.

To book your place: Call us on 01335 210353
Email info@carelinecalling.org.uk

And even better, by coming along you'll be supporting Careline and helping us continue providing our free telephone befriending service to people who may be lonely or isolated in our local community.

Get festive, get creative and support a local charity at the same time!

Come November

Come November, we're getting used to the dark evenings, which some of us don't like. The clocks have gone back and it's still dark in the late morning and again by early night. The leaves are all brown and the lawn is due its last trim, the bushes have been cut back and the trees are really thin.

Come November, we've had all Hallows, prayed and remembered for All Souls and All Saint. We've made some big fire, to celebrate the plot of Guy Fawkes and his merry lots. We talk of peace and Poppy flowers, remembering the peace makers and our fallen Hero's.

So come November we begin with lots of noise and celebration, with fancy costumes in our shops. Fireworks and strange shaped cakes, filling our baskets up, followed by decorations appearing in lots of shops. The TV then join in, with holiday movies 24/7, which does not always please, my family a lot.

So come November these are all helpful reminders of what's to come at the end of the month. We've been preparing ourselves for the journey through Advent. As it's the time and season of good cheer and good will. So as we celebrate and rejoice in our Hope, Peace, Joy and Love, remembering to give thanks, for all that we've got.

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18-11-16

District Resolution Officer

Please find attached the Job Description and Person Specification for the role we are seeking to fill.

We are looking to appoint to this role as a matter of urgency and, therefore, would be grateful if you could share the attached information widely across your circuits and encourage people to prayerfully discern whether they may have the necessary gifts and calling for the role.

We would particularly encourage anyone who feels that they may be called to this ministry to consider whether they would be willing to have a vocational conversation about the possibility of being appointed.

I would be very grateful to receive responses from anyone who feels called to explore this opportunity by the end of October 2026.

Thank you for your help in sharing this widely and for encouraging people to prayerfully consider whether this may be something to which they are being called.

With thanks and every blessing,

Michelle Gentle | District Administrator and Bookkeeper
Usual office hours: Monday to Thursday 08:00-14:30
Mobile: 07301 206429 Office: 0115 9375665

District Resolution Officer

The Methodist Church recognises that now and again incidents of inappropriate behaviour occur within its membership and it has procedures in place for dealing with complaints.

The emphasis of the Methodist Church is for reconciliation and resolution to come from these complaints and aims to use processes in place to help promote this where at all possible. The aim is to resolve problems locally while retaining powers of

discipline for more serious matters, all the while allowing the basic pastoral and conciliatory character of the Methodist Church to be maintained.

We are asking each District to appoint 1 or more (depending on size of the district) into the role of District Resolution Officer.

Role Description:

- Act as the first point of call for any complaints raised within the district
- Receive, assess, and manage complaints, disputes, and escalated cases
- Capture and share the information of the complaint via the new system (training provided) with the Connexional Complaints Support Manager
- Ensure that the advice given for handling the complaint is followed and seen through
- Ensure that the timescales for completion of advice on complaints is met
- Close communication with the Connexional Complaints Support Manager
- Ensure cases are handled in accordance with organisational policies, procedures, regulations, and service standards.
- Provide clear written and verbal explanations of decisions and outcomes
- Maintain accurate and confidential case records
- Monitor outstanding cases and ensure they are resolved within agreed timescales
- Identify recurring issues and contribute to improvements in processes and customer service

Person Specification:

- Previous experience of dealing with people who are dissatisfied or unhappy
- The ability to be able to communicate clearly with a wide range of people

- The ability to be able to analyse and summarise complex complaints raised
- A good knowledge and experience of complaint handling either within the church context or from other employment/experience outside of the Church
- Be able to identify any possible safeguarding concerns and share those with the ROS (Regional Officer of Safeguarding)
- An understanding of the importance of confidentiality and GDPR
- Knowledge and experience of using IT and have access to a computer, telephone and the internet
- The willingness and ability to attend training sessions both in person and online
- Work with Place for Hope in providing mediation to parties
- Excellent investigation and problem-solving abilities
- Ability to remain calm and professional when dealing with difficult situations
- Good judgement and decision-making skills
- Strong attention to detail and organisation
- Ability to handle confidential and sensitive information
- Good written skills, particularly for producing clear case responses
- Knowledge of relevant policies, procedures, and regulatory requirements
- Ability to manage competing priorities and deadlines

Training that will need to be completed (if not already held) during the first 6 months of taking the role:

- Advanced Safeguarding Training
- GDPR training

Ongoing Training over the first 12 months offered online:

- Growing through Change and Conflict
- Responding to Bullying and Harassment
- Spirituality, Scripture and Conflict

Don't you just love a church bulletin

The Fasting & Prayer Conference includes meals.

The sermon this morning: 'Jesus Walks on the Water'. The sermon tonight: 'Searching for Jesus.'

Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.

Don't let worry kill you off - let the Church help.

Miss Charlene Mason sang 'I will not pass this way again,' giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.

Nellie Morgan and John Rees were married on February 2nd in Newtown's Baptist church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.

At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be 'What Is Hell?' Come early and listen to our choir practice.

Seven new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of new members, and to the deterioration of some of older ones.

Scouts are saving aluminium cans, bottles and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.

Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person you want remembered.

St Hilary church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment and gracious hostility.

The ladies of St Peter's Church have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon.

This evening at 7 PM there will be a hymn singing in the park across from the Church. Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.

People's Emergency Briefing

You're invited to a 50-minute film, the People's Emergency Briefing, which premiered in April 2026. It presents the latest evidence on the climate crisis in an accessible format and features interviews by leading experts with reaction by members of the public and celebrities.

Churches are well placed to unite people in awareness of the scale and threat of the climate and nature crisis and enable communities to discuss the issues raised and explore ways to take action locally. Our local MP will be attending.

The film is supported by a coalition including the Joint Public Issues Team for the Methodists, Baptist and United Reformed Church, the Church of England, Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales, Salvation Army, CAFOD, Tearfund, A Rocha UK, Laudato Si Movement, Operation Noah, Green Christian, Christian Climate Action, and Eco Congregation Scotland.

Please come and bring your family, friends and neighbours. Tickets from the Link website or from Catherine Green.

Front page of October Connections

The editor wishes to apologise to the photographer Mark and to the Link Team that the picture of the wonderful 3 panel Mural in Trinity Hall was printed not only back to front but upside down (I have yet to find anyone who can tell me how this happened).

On the back page of this edition is an expanded photo of the panels to show them in all their splendour and below is an explanation of the manufacture and representation of the panels

The Trinity Hall Textile Panels

We're delighted to have commissioned and installed three textile panels designed and made by Juliet Hemingray Church Textiles. Juliet Hemingway is a nationally and internationally known producer of textiles producing items from panels like

ours to stoles and capes for clergy. We are blessed that she and her husband, Jonathan, live in Derby and Juliet's workshop is in Derby.

The first panel on the left shows a cross (made by Jonathan) with wood from our old pews with light radiating out from the Cross, which is placed above a representation of the Tissington Trail with some old railway tracks and then footprints of somebody starting off on a walk across the Derbyshire Dales. At the bottom of the panel there is a representation of the Henmore Brook and we can say see fish swimming in the brook, which are represented by the traditional Christian fish sign.

In the second panel we see the footprints continuing along a path through the hills, fields and meadows, with doves of peace flying above us in blue skies, with golden light flowing out from the Cross. There are foxgloves, poppies, lilies, forget-me-nots and in the middle Jacob's ladder, the official flower of Derbyshire (the plant with a 5 pointed blue flower), growing in the meadows. In the third panel we arrive at Dovedale and we can see the stepping stones crossing the River Dove and Thorpe Cloud in the background. It wouldn't be Derbyshire if we didn't have sheep on the hills. At the top of the panel are the dark skies that we have in the countryside and we can see the stars.

The words across the panels "I will lift up my eyes to the hills" are the start of Psalm 121 and are so appropriate to the beautiful area where we are blessed to live.

The panels are designed to be a permanent, fixed witness to our faith. In designing them we hope that they are inspirational for Christians as we come to worship in Trinity Hall and can be appreciated as something of beauty, which enhances our multi-purpose space, for people of all faiths and none – and is acceptable for all the community, performance and other events which are taking place in our wonderfully enhanced Trinity Hall.

Tony Walker

Ephesians 3:8.9

Lord, there are moments
When I'm honest enough to admit
I'm not infallible.
Not often, Lord
Just now and then.
I'm able to acknowledge
A few small areas of life
Where I'm not completely in control.
I admit at times
That life bewilders me
With grey half tones,
When I'd like to see it all
In black and white.
Retreat for comfort
Into simple certainties.
And that confuses me.
Makes judgements harder.

Yet through the uncertainties,
I sense your hand,
Pushing me into deeper water.
Not so that I risk drowning,
Although it sometimes feels that way, but so that I may swim
more strongly.
Learn to think and feel
With greater sensitivity.

So Lord, where certainties collide,
Give me the openness to look afresh,
Not only at what others think,
But at my own beliefs.
And when the tension shows,
And understanding goes away on holiday,
Help me to love.
And wait for you.
Spirit of truth,
to lead me deeper into truth
Whatever it may be.

IONA 2026

We touched the rocks and the waves,
And the hands of many from over the seas,
The touch was gentle,
The touch was kind,
The touch of friends,
And things now left behind.

We smelled the bread, the herbs, the coffee,
The seaweed and the ferry's fumes,
Our favourite smell we all recalled,
And the odours were the incense of our prayers.

Our food was lovingly prepared,
And eagerly devoured,
The benches were hard, the flavours mattered,
(except for some the butterbeans),
And we escaped for fish and a meat pie; battered.

We heard the bell, we heard the drum,
We heard music and voices echo among the stones.
We were never far from the sound of laughter,
Or the starling's surprising song.

We saw a light in the eyes of others,
The sun on the water and the mist on the hills.
The sights were familiar and everlasting thrills.

Our senses were all exercised that week,
And in that other sense more things were perceived,
That the God of Joy smiled at our humanity,
And laughed with us.

Alan Coker Mayes.

Nottingham and Derby District

Volunteer with Us!

We are looking for people to join us in a range of voluntary roles, helping to support the life, mission and ministry of the Nottingham and Derby Methodist District

**Sabbaticals Advisory Group
Ecumenical Officer (West)
SACRE Representative (Derby)
District Executive Lay Representative
Assistant Synod Secretary
Finance Office – job Description soon**

Whether you have experience in these areas or simply feel you have something to offer, we'd love to hear from you.

For an informal conversation, to express your interest, or simply to apply, please contact Jo Padmore, District HR Officer at hr@methodist-nd.org.uk

Your Time, Your Gifts, Your Contribution.

Lester Lowe – The Man and the Company

In 1969 Lester Lowe, almost by accident, began his building and farm supply business. He had bought some cement in bulk to modernize and extend his farm and ended up selling it to his neighbours as a favour. He bought it for £7 a tonne and sold it at £8 a tonne. And so began the (so far) 57 year history of a well known and appreciated Derbyshire business. His ethos back then was to never overcharge for goods, and it remains part of the fabric of the company to this day.

I asked Lester about his early life.

I was born and brought up at Brek Farm and I have never lived anywhere else. Looking Back, life was both enjoyable but hard

as well. We had no electricity or mains water. Milking was done by hand and when my father was alive he farmed with horses – no tractors back then. I went to Kniveton primary school which had pupils from age 5 to 15 but I was fortunate to be able to move up to the grammar school in Ashbourne. I left school just before I was 5 yrs old. My father died when I was just 12 years old, so I was often allowed days off school to ensure the jobs on the farm were kept up with. That was in addition to milking 2 or 3 cows by hand both before and after school each day. The farm was rented so we had to get out or borrow ,cost of the money to buy the 85 acre farm for £6000. It was a lot of money in 1953.

What family did you have growing up?

I had three sisters growing up, plus a fourth older sister that we knew nothing about until a few decades ago. She was adopted before the rest of us were born but thankfully found us when she was 60. Unfortunately she died a few years ago.

Tell me about the origins of your business.

It began as a side line to the farm and contracting that I used to do and it gradually grew from there as people kept requesting that I source a wider range of items. It eventually got to the stage where I had to give up dairying and devote my time wholly to the business. Although I did keep beef cows for a while. That was probably about 30 years ago.

Some of your staff have worked for you for a long time – what's your secret?

I've always believed you should treat your staff and customers fairly. I charge a fair price for the goods I sell and I pay my staff as well as I can. Some have shares in the company and as I have been loyal to them they are loyal to me. Six of them have been with me for over 20 years.

Are you fully retired now?

No I can't live here and not be involved so long as I am mentally and physically able. I do pop in to open the post and often jump on a fork lift truck or JCB. It is a challenge to let go completely.

Tell me about your faith journey.

I can remember folk coming to the village from Cliff College (at Calver) and from London City Mission. They helped my faith. I've always believed in God, always had a faith. I don't understand many things - especially why is there so much suffering in the world, but I do have faith. I know that God is always there to help me. He has seen me through some tough times – from working all hours when I was younger in order to keep the farm going, to losing my beloved Linda.

I wish I had shared my faith more. I've found it hard to talk about it. *(To which I replied ; Lester, you might not have spoken about your faith very much, but the way you have run your business, been generous to many organisations, your fostering and kindness to people have all been ways in which you have lived out your faith and been a blessing to others)*

How did you and Linda first meet?

My hobby used to be hedge laying competitions. I was taken to the DRI as at the West Hallam event when I unfortunately had an accident, cutting the muscles in my knee, I was stitched up and a very shy boy, maybe in 'shock' got talking to a 17 year old cadet nurse. It was one of those moments that you don't know if God panned it or not. If I'd not had the accident we wouldn't have met! After a three year courtship and Linda had finished her training we got married and had 37 years of a very happy interesting life.

Unfortunately, we could not have children of our own and so fostered for 18 years. Sarah was our first along with her brother Steve. She was only 3 years old but is still with us 47 years later,

in charge of our equestrian department and a daughter to be very proud of.

In addition to the fostering over a period of 10 years we supported various children through the Chernobyl Children's Life Line (CCLL), as did others in the Ashbourne area. They would come and stay for a month with us and we would go out there to support them. They were so appreciative of the help they received. It brought us much happiness in being able to help them.

It was through CCLL that I got to know my present wife of 18 years – Nina and her family is Belarus. We are so proud of Nina's granddaughter who at 24, has completed her first year as a junior doctor at Derby Royal.

How do you farming now?

It's a shame that there aren't anything like as many dairy farmers around here as there used to be. There's also so much administration work that has to be done on line. If I could change one thing about farming now it would be to reduce the amount of rules and regulations that surround farming and which takes up so much time and money. Some of the health and safety rules in our business now are unbelievable.

If you could go back in time and give your younger self a piece of advice, what would it be?

Talk to people and learn from them instead of just learning from experience – especially when you get things wrong. I learned a lot from the salesmen in the early days but I was mostly self sufficient and wanted to do it all my own. You can learn from your mistakes but you also need to ask others for advice.

What would you like to be remembered for?

Leaving something good behind. Respect. I've helped a few people develop and grow themselves and their businesses. Helping Chernobyl children.

Phil Michell, Lead Agricultural Chaplain.

LOGOS HOPE

The latest Mercy Ship of OM (Operation Mobilisation) will be berthed in Liverpool Docks from 22 October to 10 November. This is a great opportunity to see how George Verwer's vision of reaching many countries with the good news of Jesus has taken place.

A coach will be leaving Ashbourne bus station on 4 November at 8.10 am and return about 5.30 pm. You'll be able to meet the crew, participate in onboard events, enjoy the cafe, wander the bookfair and much more! Although the main aim of the ship is to serve people in the port communities, those on board also benefit personally during their term of service.

Check Logos Hope - www.gbaships.org

For more information or to book contact Joyce on 07807273095

Continuation of a Memento of 150 Years of Methodism at Mercaston Chapel (*apologies for this not being included in October*)

God Guides the Horse.

The velvet blackness of night had settled over Mercaston. But sleep had not settled upon Sarah Bembridge. As she tossed and turned in her bed, and undefining 'Something' seemed to be telling her to arise, dress and go out. Unable to fight off this feeling, and knowing deep in her heart that the Lord was bidding her, she dressed, went outside and set her horse between the shafts of the trap. Wrapping a shawl around her shoulders, she flicked the reins and the horse ambled off down the lane unguided by human hand.

Down into the Derwent Valley and along the river Amber the animal trotted, clomping his way up the hill at Hartshay and into the town of Ripley. Then he wandered up and down one of the Streets. Sarah waited patiently. Suddenly although it was 2am.. someone burst out of a house. 'Are you Sarah Kirkland' a voice cried. Sarah reigned in the horse, 'I am'. The darkened figure

spoke again, 'I've been praying for you to come. Someone here is dying and wanted to see you before she passed away.'

And so, as Sarah reached the bedside she received a weak smile and an outstretched hand. Sarah ministered beautiful words of comfort, and the old lady dies. The horse's Spirit led Mission was over.

The Glory.

Sarah Bembridge's only picture now graces a central position inside the Methodist Chapel at Mercaston (written in 1977). The lines on her face show the passionate earnestness with which she urged her listeners to escape from the 'wrath to come' offering to them instead, the Way of Christ. See, too, her hand. Two fingers are missing bitten off by the piglets one day, as she tended the farm.

Mercaston Chapel itself owes its foundations to Sarah Kirkland, just 150 years ago (note 1977). Sarah beat out the path but Gave God the Glory.

An Honoured Place.

From small beginnings, God Builds his people. Over the years many other names enter our Anniversary Story. Mary Hill of Padley Hall, Ripley married Mr Hall of Mansell Park, Hulland Ward and preached in the greater Brailsford area for 48 years. Mr Bembridge the second husband of Sarah was himself for 50 years a local preacher and his family still reside in the Mercaston Area.

The Deeds – Thomas Wallis sold the land and Samuel Riley and William Bembridge were granted permission to build Mercaston primitive Methodist Chapel on the site in 1825 and Mr Wallis retained the retention of the land iff the society failed.

Joyce Odell who kindly provided this document from which we have taken three extracts is now busy trying to find the author and the history from 1977 to when ever the chapel closed and the remaining contacts to Methodism in Mercaston.

Nottingham and Derby Methodist District

**Save the Date
Saturday 10th April 2027**

Cliff College Festival Day
In the Nottingham and Derby District

Theme – Love God, Love others, make disciples

2pm. Gather and Worship led by the Cliff Team

2.30pm 3 Workshop sessions

1. Children and young people focused in some way
2. Bible Study
3. A 'how to...' session

3.30pm Tea Break

4pm Introduction to Cliff College

4.30pm Celebration worship led by the Cliff Team

6pm End

Venue to be announced

THREADS THROUGH THE CROSS by Jacqui Parkinson

is coming to Lichfield Cathedral from 10th October to 23rd November. It will show 18 embroidered panels depicting events leading up to the crucifixion – the resurrection and the ascension. This is the latest exhibition of panels she has designed having produced one on creation another centred on Revelations. These are thought provoking and it is a great opportunity to see her new work which is on tour.

Joy

Dates for the Diary – Services

Sunday 18th October

Ashbourne	10.30	Diana Whitmill Lorraine Hawkins and Anne Payne
	18.30	Paul Taylor, Praise
Brailsford	10.30	Ann Parkinson
Tissington	10.30	Revd Nicola Briggs, Holy Communion

Sunday 25th October

Ashbourne	10.30	Revd Arnold Dixon and Jonathan Webb Becky and Tim Dutton
Brailsford	15.00	Afternoon Tea at All Saints
Kirk Ireton	18.30	Revd Nicola Briggs
Kniveton	11.00	Revd Nicola Briggs

Sunday 1st November

Ashbourne	10.30	Revd Mark Broadhurst and Jeff Ffoulkes Stuart Green and Anne Payne
Brailsford	10.30	Revd Nicola Briggs, Holy Communion
Parwich	14.30	Revd Nicola Briggs, Holy Communion

Sunday 8th November**Remembrance Sunday**

Ashbourne	<u>10.45</u>	Revd Andy Fyall and Gareth Rutledge Paul Taylor and Amanda Peers
Brailsford	10.45	All Saints
Kniveton	14.30	Revd Nicola Briggs, Holy Communion

Sunday 15th November

Ashbourne	10.30	Cathy Stubbs Lorraine Hawkins and Anne Payne
	18.30	Revd John Hellyer, Praise
Brailsford	10.30	Diana Whitmill, Altogether Worship
Muddy	10.00	Ashbourne Area
Tissington	10.30	Revd Arnold Dixon

Sunday 22nd November

Ashbourne	10.30	Revd Nicola Briggs and Jonathan Webb Becky and Tim Dutton Holy Communion
Brailsford	15.00	All Saints
Kirk Ireton	18.30	Revd Arnold Dixon
Kniveton	11.00	Tom Parkinson

Dates for the Diary – Events and Meetings

Wednesday 21 st Oct	19.00	Kirk Ireton Harvest Supper Please book with the Dormans
Thursday 22 nd Oct	14.30	Smaller Churches Meeting Kirk Ireton
Tuesday 3 rd Nov	19.00	Worship Forum Trinity Hall, Ashbourne
Tuesday 10 th Nov	19.30	Resources Forum Sub-Group Venue TBA
Wednesday 11 th Nov	19.00	Ashbourne Leadership Team The Manse
Thursday 12 th Nov	14.00	Outreach Forum Jacqui Marsh's home
Thursday 12 th Nov	19.00	Circuit Leadership Team The Manse
Tuesday 17 th Nov	19.30	Local Preachers & Worship Leaders Meeting Trinity Hall, Ashbourne
Tuesday 1 st Dec	19.30	One Church Circuit Meetings Trinity Hall

A VICTORIAN FAMILY CHRISTMAS

Saturday 12th December, 2-4pm

Enjoy a Victorian Family Christmas experience in our beautifully atmospheric Primitive Methodist Chapel.

- ♦ Christmas Carols ♦ Christmas Crafting ♦
- ♦ Victorian Refreshments ♦ Storytelling ♦

Pay on the door: Over 14s
£2; under 14s £1; under 5s
free. Parking available.



Google Maps



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The December edition of Connections will be compiled on the next deadline day – 8th November 2026. Items by hand or email to clifflewer@aol.com by tea time latest please.

