

Ashbourne Methodist One Church Circuit

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



Connections September 2026



Open Day entertainment in Trinity Hall and
Century Hall



Dear friends in the Ashbourne One Church Circuit and further afield

I am recently returned from the Keswick Convention where I have had the opportunity to serve as part of the Welcome Team. As many of you are aware my back has decided to take a significant turn for the worse so my service was much more limited than on previous occasions. The theme of the 151st Convention was 'Strong in his Strength' which felt particularly relevant to me. Whilst there I was able to share with others that I was again being reminded of Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 12:9-10. These verses follow Paul admitting he has a thorn in his flesh that despite asking God to remove Paul was to live with it. Paul tells us that God spoke to him saying:

My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is
made perfect in weakness.

Paul realised that it was when he was weak in his own being that he was strong through God working in him. I will not be the only one currently struggling with a long term 'thorn in their flesh'. You too may have something that is burdening you physically, mentally, or spiritually. It may be something that hampers your ability to do the things in life that bring you joy or peace. Please do not struggle alone. I know for certain that my back would be a lot worse without the countless number of people who have held it in their prayers in the last 30+ years. Prayer does make a difference in coping with our thorns, sometimes it sees them disappear completely, sometimes it brings alongside us people who have wisdom to share with us, sometimes it brings us a peace to cope.

I do not believe that God wants any of us to suffer. But, I do believe that God can use our suffering to make a difference in our life or in the lives of people around us. It is often only with hindsight that we see God's power made perfect in our weakness. Be assured of my continued prayers for you all as we face all that life throws at us.

We have much to look forward to in the coming weeks and months as the Ashbourne One Church Circuit. As the new connexional year approaches (1st September), please do continue to pray for brothers and sisters across the circuit as we look at how we can do mission and ministry together. Let us continue to praise God for all that is past and trust him for all that is to come.

Blessings

Nicola

Church Family News September 2026

As I come to the end of my tenure as Secretary to the Pastoral Forum on 31st August, this will be my last family news article for the Connections magazine! So I am writing this with mixed feelings. Thanks to all the Pastoral team for their support and continued care for our church family. Also to Cliff L for his patience as I am usually the last one to send in an article!

On Sunday 19 July we welcomed Renée B and Phoebe B into membership of our church and also Zion was baptized during the service. We offer a warm welcome to them and all 'new' people coming to worship with us. It was lovely to speak to some visitors at church just this morning, who were holidaying in our beautiful part of the country.

Exam results will be out soon and we wish all our young people the best on that day.

There are some special birthdays around this time. Eric M celebrated his 95th birthday on 8 Aug, Isaac G celebrated his 21st on 7 Aug, and William G will be 18 on 30 September. Birthday greetings to you all. We also send Joyce & Richard O our congratulations as they celebrate their golden wedding on 4 September.

We also continue to pray for those we know who are struggling with ill health and those receiving treatment including: Chris D, Diane P, Hyacinth S-D, Kay O, Liz Hi, Margaret He, Nina C & Rev Nicola.

Sadly, I have to share the news that John Hancock and Stephen Wood have both passed away and we keep their families and friends in our thoughts and prayers. Steve's funeral will take place at 2pm on 24 August at Markeaton Crematorium. John's funeral will take place at 1pm on 3 September also at Markeaton Crematorium.

Wendy Haslam

(Pastoral secretary 09.08.26)

Psalm 23:1-3

The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul.

Thank you

We are so very grateful for everyone's prayers, love and support (and flowers!) during Liz's chemo, thank you. It means so much. The 6 cycles went smoothly from April to August and, miraculously, none were missed. Thank you, Lord. By the time you read this, we should know what the next steps are. In the meantime, we are doing lots of lovely things and just so grateful to you all at AMC and our church family in Hartington for such loving care.

Liz and Stuart Hitch

TAKE ME TO THE CROSS

Take me to the cross Lord
And let me kneel in awe
In wonder of Your love Lord
Many years before

Show to me the cross Lord
Open up my eyes
At the way that Jesus suffered Lord
So I could gain the prize

Light up the cross for me Lord
To see Your glory there
Where Jesus bled and died Lord
So I can climb the stair

Keep me near the cross Lord
In my daily walk with Thee
Help me to remember Lord
What Jesus did for me

Hang me on the cross Lord
Make me take my part
In the suffering You did Lord
To purify my heart

Then take me from the cross Lord
And make me rise again
As You did with Jesus Lord
No more to suffer pain

Use me at the cross Lord
For the benefit of all
Make me more aware Lord
Of Your bidding and Your call

And now I'm near the cross Lord
I begin to realise
Just how great a sacrifice Lord
And just how great the prize

Beyond and on from the cross Lord
Is by far a better place
A place where Jesus reigns Lord
Filled with majesty and grace

Take me to the cross Lord
So I make take a share
With all of Your believers Lord
In Your love and tender care

(Contributed by Maureen Vollans)

Remembering Jean

Jean was born on January 13th, 1931, to Douglas and Rene Lilley, who went on to have Ruth and Kate. They lived on Clarence Road, with Jean attending a local school until war broke out in 1939, when, with her mum and sister Ruth, she was evacuated to Buxton. After finishing school, Jean went to work on a farm in Shottle for a time. This farm, part of the Chatsworth Estate, was run by Ruth L's family, the Deauvilles. Ruth L was very young when Jean came, but after Jean left, she kept in touch with the family, sending cards to Ruth L's children all that time.

Jean went on to train as a nurse at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham. She went on to be Ward Sister at Derby Women's Hospital. Molly P remembers meeting Jean at this time as her mother had been admitted there for an operation. Molly remarked on how kind Jean was to them.



Around this time, Jean was the proud owner of a motor bike, a Triumph Terrier.

In May 1965, Jean married Bill Wathall, the local funeral director and they set up home in Derby. Jean was regularly the first contact families had when calling Wathall's out of hours and she remained a Director of the company until a few months ago. Jean and Bill had two daughters, Helen and Francis and went on to have 3 grand children and 4 great grandchildren. Jean always spoke very proudly of her family.

In 1985 the family moved to Calwich. In 1995, sadly Bill died. It was around this time that Jean got involved at Ashbourne Methodist church, the WI, U3A, the Field club and various classes.

Several of the current members of AMC remember Jean fondly. Tom P - "I was always impressed by Jean's kindness and above all, her genuine interest in every aspect of my life – preaching, farm, family..."

Margaret He – "In spite of her limitations with mobility, eyesight and hearing, Jean never complained. She was always willing to help, offering a listening ear when needed. Jean was a lovely, warm hearted lady.

Liz S – I found Jean to be a quiet, kind, warm hearted lady who was always interested in your conversation.

Margaret Ha - When new to this area and the church, one Sunday morning I shared a pew with Jean and her little granddaughter. This 'chance' meeting led Jean to educate me in many delightful local places to visit – always with a splendid café or teashop involved. Dear Jean, the pleasantest, gentlest and fun loving of friends, who bore her eyesight problems in the most stoic of ways.

I thoroughly endorse the comments above. Jean was always outward looking and interested in how everyone else was. She read the weekly church notices and the Connections magazine

with interest and always asked about the events and people mentioned there. She approached her own problems in matter-of-fact way and with a wry sense of humour. Jean will be greatly missed by many people.

Rosemary W

We wanted to convey our thanks for the lovely cards, messages and kindness shown to us following the death of our mum, Jean Wathall. We have been overwhelmed by the amount of messages we have received, and at how many people came to her funeral service, all with a memory to share. Mum was always very grateful for the welcome she received within the Church family, and for the connections made. You have been a wonderful support to mum for the last 30 years, and for that we are very grateful.

Helen and Frances

*My wife says I make the salads to dry.
It is definitely something that needs addressing.*

*My wife threw a handful of Omega 3 capsules at me last night.
I'm ok though, I escaped with super fish oil injuries.*

*My wife is a terrible cook, she can never get sausages right.
I've stuck with her though, through thick and thin.*

*Why did my wife cross the road.
To get back into the first shoe shop we left three hours ago.*

*I re-labeled all the jars on my wife's spice rack,
I'm not in trouble yet but the thyme is cumin.*

Link Centre Open Day – What a day!

First and foremost, thank you to everyone who helped with the Open Day on Saturday 18 July. I think it's fair to say, it was a hugely successful day and during the four hours we welcomed 406 people. Most had come to see how we have transformed our Church so that it can now be used by the whole community. The week prior to the Open Day 9000 leaflets promoting the Open Day and the Link Centre were distributed to houses and local businesses in Ashbourne and the surrounding area. Stuart does deserve a special mention. After designing and producing the leaflets, to ensure they arrived in time at the Royal Mail distribution centre in Warrington, he did a 130 mile round trip with his car fully laden down!

Visitors were welcomed in the Atrium by a team of greeters and another team was on hand to offer refreshments. Trinity Hall was set up in the same style as for Sunday services and the two large screens had a rolling presentation promoting different aspects of our Church activities.

Throughout the day we had live music in Trinity Hall creating a lovely lively atmosphere. Performances included soloist singers Rene Barrow and Poppy Worthington – Harris, The Jam Band, who also ran a mini drums workshop and the day came to an end with Dale Culliford on her cello.

In Century Hall, twelve local organisations had table top stands and during the day there was a continuous stream of visitors going around the stands. Riverside Hall was set up for children of all ages and with activities provided by Welly Club and the Open the Book team did two performances during the day.

Visitors were also able to view the facilities at Gateway Lodge, and those who knew it from when it was the Gateway Centre were really impressed by the transformation. As well as taking group bookings, Gateway Lodge is now offering affordable accommodation in the town for individual bookings. The weekend after the Open Day, we achieved a new milestone with all seven rooms being booked by seven different families!

Once again, thank you to everyone who helped make the Open Day such a huge success. Our journey of outreaching into the local community has most definitely started!

Crispin Scott

Farming Today

At the Manifold Valley Agricultural Show yesterday it was announced throughout the day that the absence of cattle and sheep was because of the very recent outbreak of blue tongue virus which was affecting the area. Blue tongue virus is a midge-borne viral disease affecting sheep and cattle among other animals. While potentially fatal for livestock, the virus does not affect humans. It does not affect food safety. Meat and milk from infected animals are safe to eat and drink.

Hot weather has created favourable conditions for the virus to spread as high temperatures allow it to develop more quickly in midges. Many farms in Devon and Cornwall are reporting the disease and in the last week there have been signs of the virus in animals in our area too. Farmers are distressed as they see their animals become lethargic and ill. It is terrifying going out to the fields and knowing that you could have many more sick animals. Farmers are working closely with vets. Where there are suspected cases (waiting for test results) it is believed that most will return positive.

We will all know farmers, see animals in the fields or hear or see the News and so let us get alongside farmers in prayer at this devastating time. Messages of encouragement would be really appreciated.

Derbyshire Rural Chaplaincy will be supporting many of these farmers affected by the blue tongue outbreak so Rev Phil Michell (Lead Agricultural Chaplain) and the team need wisdom as they listen and decide how best to support farmers.

Joyce O 09.08.2026

Continuation of a Momento of 150 years at Mercaston Chapel

Dangerous Task.

Not only was it dangerous for women to venture out alone, the practice of having women for preachers was not encouraged, even by the new Wesleyans.

‘Balaam was converted by the praying of an ass’ said one minister’ ‘and Peter by the crowing of a Cock’ He looked down at the coffin he was about to inter.

‘But our late lamented brother here was converted by the preaching of a woman: God often uses strange instruments.’

All these prejudices have to be remembered when we look at the personal qualities and passion for evangelism in the life of Sarah Kirkland.

Yet in four years of trailing the countryside, opening new places of worship, holding camp meetings and fellowships in the roughest quarters never once was she accosted, insulted or rudely treated. Christ went with her – ever step of the way.

Her story is almost romantic; certainly astonishing. No place was beyond her, nor beneath her dignity to visit.

The keeper of a disreputable gin shop listened behind his closed doors. Then he renounced his evil trade and became a local preacher of the Gospel. Within a few days, a new cleaner society was raised round him.

Powerful new circuits of Christina folks grew up in Nottingham and Derby from the preaching of this frail, teenage girl.

Labour of Love

It was said in 1816 that she became a regular travelling preacher. Hugh Bourne wrote that she was ‘managing and

useful' and 'she laboured at large with great credit and success', raising the character of potential women preachers.

As she returned from a meeting in Nottingham Forest one day a horseman overtook her. 'Will you preach to us at Bulwell Miss? Oh please, 'I beg of you' he cried. That evening, Sarah was addressing a large congregation there from a cart in a field. Within a month, sixty people had joined the Society. So she held another meeting at Bulwell, later in the year. This time a multitude listened. Before long, the rough population of the mining village of Ilkeston had received her, and a marvellous transformation followed.

But over in Hucknall Torkard, a certain John Harrison was failing to make an impression. So Sarah Kirkland went there, and another new branch of the Society was formed. And love has now entered Sarah's heart. She married and became Mrs Harrison, wife of the preacher. She still opened more Society branches, still witnessed revivals. But soon, John Harrison must have died, because Sarah then married a Mr Bembridge, another devout Christian Local Peacher.

The final section of this story will be in the next Connections.

CARELINE CHARITY

Some of you may remember the fairly recent service when Rev Sam Cowling-Green spoke about the work of the MHA (Methodist Homes for the Aged).One of the things he talked about on that occasion was the work that MHA does to keep in touch with older people, by providing them with regular phone calls.

With this in mind, I felt it might be helpful to write about our local 'Care Line' charity, which organises volunteers to regularly call people who are signposted to us by a social worker or a health professional.

Volunteers make phone calls from their own home, and you can volunteer for as many or as few hours as you like. For example, I just do 2 hours per week, on the same morning each week, but other volunteers do different slots each week. If you are going on holiday, that's fine, your name just does not go on the rota.

There are a number of people in our Ashbourne Church who are currently volunteers, and there are other people who have volunteered in the past, and I think they would all say what a valuable experience it is to be involved with Careline, both for those making the calls and the people who receive them.

I know from my own experience that, before I became a volunteer, I had never really considered how difficult and lonely life can be for some older people, who have no family members or friends to support them, keep in touch with them, or to talk things over with. Of course some clients do have families and friends, but they may still be housebound and spend much of the day on their own, and they tell us how much they look forward to their Careline calls, and I know that those of us who call the same people regularly also look forward to our chats with them.

At the MHA service, Rev Sam Cowling-Green spoke about Christians 'inviting people to the table', and compared it to the way the servants, in The Parable of the Wedding Feast, were sent out to the byways and highways, to invite everyone to the feast, to invite those people who are often overlooked and marginalised, and it seems to me that this is what Careline does.

If you are considering some sort of volunteering, and you like the idea of a chatting to people for 15 mins or so, you might like to consider becoming a Careline caller, but if you don't want to actually make the phone calls, there are other ways you could support this charity.

For example you might choose to become a Friend of Careline, to help with fundraising ideas. Sadly, Careline can no longer receive Lottery Funding, and this is one reason why we now have only one paid member of staff when there used to be two.

Lottery Funding has been an important source of Careline funding in recent times, but Lottery funding in the future will be concentrating on projects which support Homelessness and Poverty, and Careline falls outside of this remit.

We also need volunteers who could offer an hour or so to help with admin issues, or you might like to consider becoming a Trustee for the Careline charity. Tricia Barclay is a Trustee and she will be happy to talk to anyone about the role and what it involves.

Finally, a reminder that Tricia will in fact be taking part in a Sponsored Walk for Careline at Carsington Reservoir, on September the 4th, and she would be delighted if you could support Careline by sponsoring her in this event - or even joining her on the walk and getting people to sponsor you!

If you would like to know any more about volunteering, please feel free to contact me.

Cathy Stubbs

Bishop Francis's Visit

First of all, we should like to thank all those who contributed to the success of the visit. We were very sorry to miss so much of it. Our special thanks go to Cathie and Crispin who not only hosted Bishop Francis but also took over the day to day running of the visit.

Bishop Francis last visited Ashbourne 8 years ago. He was delighted to meet people he had last seen then. He was also able to meet people who had visited the Patna Diocese in the past.

A variety of activities were arranged in the programme - services at St Oswald's, Ashbourne Methodist Church, Milldale Chapel, Welly Club, Mothers Union, Monday night House group, the Food Bank and more. However, he very much appreciated

meeting and talking with a wide variety of people, exchanging ideas and experiences. This is an essential part of our Partnership.

Hopefully Bishop Francis visit will be the start of the process of revitalizing the ACT/Patna Partnership. Talking with the Bishop has given us some ideas for the future but these need developing and are more long term. For the more immediate future we should like to be able to send 3 illustrated newsletters to the Diocese per year - Christmas, Easter and Harvest. To do this we shall need volunteers from each Church to collect photographs with some explanatory text. Initially we would be happy to collate all the material into a newsletter. Eventually we hope there might be someone to take over as editor.

Crispin is planning to visit the Diocese in November. If anyone is interested in joining him please get in touch.

Finally, thank you once again for making the visit a success.

Liz and John.



Beyond Worship: A Reflective Prayer

Prayers for Leaders in the Church and our Government

Leadership

It says in 1 Timothy 2:1-2 that we should

“Pray for all of those in authority that we may live peaceful and quiet lives, in godliness and holiness”.

Our Leaders, in our Church and in our Government are here to serve the people well, to defend the needy, bringing all concerns to God, by leading with wisdom and integrity. Seeking justice and protection for all, that they have care, and authority over. We pray that they are continually looking for peace and righteous guidance, day by day. We pray for protection and safety for all our leaders and their families and that we all may show grace, kindness and compassion towards those in Authority.

Church Leaders

We ask you God to give our Leaders in the Church a clear direction for wisdom and vision, for humble hearts and a real deep understanding of your word and how it relates to their people, so that they can share that knowledge and insight with their congregation and their communities.

We ask for strength and protection for their families and themselves. We pray to guard them from ‘burnout’. Allow them Lord to see, the leadership qualities in others around them. We ask you Lord, to help them, to stand firm and strong against all forms of temptations, that will lead them away from you, especially, those things that we cannot see, those things that are right in their eyes. Help them Lord, to see everything and all things, only, through your eyes. Help our Leaders Lord, to be BOLD, so that they speak the gospel everywhere they go with courage, and love.

Government Leaders

We ask you God to help, our Leaders in Government, to seek justice and peace in all of our communities; to have wisdom and guidance to promote fair laws; to surround themselves with wise and honest counsel, and to turn away from the pulls of greed and corruption. We pray to not let, political division, cause us to see others as enemies but lead us to be kind, respectful and consult constructive actions, respecting our differences.

We prayer for the Government leaders, to have integrity and a, sound work ethic; to stand for truth, justice and compassion, for all the people in our country.

Leaders

We pray Lord God, that all leaders, whether in Church or Government, keep their eyes on you, for we are powerless without you in our lives. We pray, that we will cry out when needed, Praise when needed, as Lord, this will take us all Beyond Worship for you.

As Romans 8:28 says

"... we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose".

So Lord, as leaders in all fields, help us to stand and walk tall, speak boldly, so that we can show to all, that we are worthy of our calling, as Leaders for the Lord, our God.

I lift up all of these prayers for our Leaders, to you Lord, in the name of Jesus, our saviour and redeemer, forever and always. Amen.

(Hyacinth Sweeney-Dixon 3rd August 2026)

Acts 14: 19-22

One of my most treasured experiences is that of speaking in the main Moscow Baptist Church to the Sunday congregation. It was the third service of the day – Sunday evening – and the church was packed with 800 people, eager to listen to what I had to say. My wife and I returned to the Church the following Tuesday evening for a baptismal service; 12 women and 3 men, young and old, confessing their faith in Christ through a believers baptism. After three sermons, several hymns, anthems and prayers, a request came from the congregation, asking for the brother from England could speak again. I reminded them of Philippians 4:13- I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me- the text has meant much to me. It does not say 'I can do all things easily', or without effort or difficulty, but it promises his strength in our work and witness for him. The comment brought a response from those listening, living as they must under some stress. And yet, difficult or not, there was great joy and loving concern within the fellowship.

In Acts there is a situation of stress. After preaching in Lystra, Paul had been stoned and left for dead. He recovered, went on, but later returned to Lystra, deliberately going out of his way to do so. Why?, To 'put fresh heart into the disciples, encouraging them to persevere in the faith'. Neither weariness nor danger could prevent Paul from doing what he felt was right. He accepted danger and stress because the believers needed him, knowing in his heart that his Lord would give him the necessary strength. Perhaps it is worth meditating, for a few minutes, on these situations. They will say different things to each of us in relation to our own lives and work, and the stresses we live under. It says something to me, in my situation; I hope it does to you.

Dates for the Diary – Services

Sunday 16th August

Ashbourne	10.30	Revd Nicola Briggs and Stuart Green Baptism, Altogether Worship
Ashbourne	18.30	Gareth Rutledge Praise
Brailsford	10.30	Revd Andy Fyall Holy Communion
Tissington	10.30	Revd Tim Morris Church Anniversary

Sunday 23rd August

Ashbourne	10.30	Allan Shaw and Gareth Rutledge Catherine and Stuart Green
Brailsford	15.00	All Saints
Kirk Ireton	18.30	Revd Nicola Briggs
Kniveton	11.00	Revd Nicola Briggs Holy Communion

Sunday 30th August

Ashbourne	10.30	Cathy Stubbs Tim Dutton and Lorraine Hawkins
	18.30	Revd Nicola Briggs Holy Communion
Brailsford	10.30	Revd Nicola Briggs Pastries and Praise
	10.00	onwards for Pastries

Sunday 6th September

Ashbourne	10.30	Lorraine Hawkins and Stuart Greeb Altogether Worship
	16.30	Revd Nicola Briggs Afternoon Tea
Brailsford	10.30	Revd Mark Broadhurst Holy Communion
Parwich	14.30	Allan Shaw

Sunday 13th September

Ashbourne	10.30	Revd Nicola Briggs and Revd Dr Andrew Stobart, Stuart Green and Amanda Peers CIRCUIT SERVICE followed by lunch
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Sunday 20th September

Ashbourne	10.30	Peter Dawson and Gareth Rutledge Cathrine Green and Amanda Peers
	18.30	Tim Dutton and Revd Nicola Briggs Praise with Holy Communion
Brailsford	10.30	Own Arrangement – Harvest Altogether Worship
Muddy	10.00	Ashbourne Area
Tissington	10.30	Tom Parkinson

Dates for the Diary – Events and Meetings

Saturday 15 th August		Ashbourne Show
Saturday 22 nd August	14.30	Dedication Service at Ashbourne
Wednesday 2 nd Sept	19.30	Local Preachers & Worship Leaders Century Hall, Ashbourne
Tuesday 8 th Sept	18.30	Ashbourne Churches Together Trinity Hall, Ashbourne
Wednesday 9 th Sept	19.30	Pastoral Forum Century Hall, Ashbourne
Tuesday 15 th Sept	19.30	Muddy Church Meeting The Manse
Thursday 17 th Sept	14.00	Outreach Forum Jacqui M's home
Friday 18 th Sept	10.00	Circuit Leadership Team The Manse
Saturday 19 th Sept	10.00	District Synod, Nuttall

The October edition of Connections has a deadline for entering items of Sunday 13th September 2026. Please email to clifflewer@aol.com or deliver by hand.

Muddy Church in July



