



Messenger

Solihull Methodist Church

April 2024

Beetle Fun

The Beetle Drive held at the beginning of March was a great family evening of fun. There was an age range of 84 years from nearly 2 years old to 86! There was a lot of concentration trying to throw the right number on the dice to draw beetles and also when it came to adding up the scores. There was much moving around as winners and losers moved from table to table.

There were prizes for children and adults as well as a prize for an overall winner. The overall winner was one of the youngest there and he was so delighted by his success that he celebrated by doing a series of leaps down the length of the church hall. This set a



precedent with all the prize winners having to emulate his leaping example. Andrea won the adult prize and Abi got the booby prize! It was an evening of huge fun.

A baked potato supper was served with a variety of fillings, cheese, tuna, coleslaw and baked beans and most people had some of everything on their potatoes! The meal was finished with traybakes.

£547 was raised for the church project, Matthew Rusike Childrens' Homes in Zimbabwe.

Thank you to everyone for all their hard work to make it such a successful evening.

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Church Family News

New granddaughter



Alison and Chris are delighted to announce the safe arrival of Robyn Isabelle Nancy to Matt and Harriet. Robyn was born on January 24th and weighed 7lbs 2oz.

80th Birthday



Peter Benson will be celebrating his 80th birthday on 3rd April. Happy birthday, Peter

Diamond Wedding Anniversary

Congratulations to **Sheila and Tony Austin**, who celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary last month. They were married at the Baptist Chapel in Milnsbridge, Huddersfield on 28th March 1964. We send love and best wishes from family and friends



Death

We are sorry to announce the sudden death of Eric Fawthrop. Eric died in his sleep on 20th March aged 96. We remember his family and friends in our prayers



Prayer Box

We pray for:

- Andrew and Judith Dickinson on the death of Andrew's father, Ray Dickinson
- James and Cathy Coleman, on the death of James's father
- Andrew and Fiona Gilyead, on the death of Andrew's father, Rev John Gilyead
- Brenda Downing, who has been in hospital
- Kelvin Yu and Clara Chiu and family, on the death of Kelvin's father Hong Kong
- Joyce Knight, who has spent time in hospital



Church Mission Statement

We believe that to make the all-embracing love of Jesus Christ known, we need to be brave in God's changing world so that all can belong and find hope

Kevin Allen

Kevin was born in London in 1963 and lived in Romford, Essex at first and later in Colchester, until he was twelve. His brother, Michael, was born in 1966. He enjoyed school, being appointed head boy of his junior school. Kevin did not forget his friends, and kept in touch with them for the rest of his life.

In 1975, the family moved to Solihull, and he began attending Solihull School. There, he achieved good A-level grades in double maths and physics, but, most of all, he enjoyed taking part in plays directed by Laurie Bailey, who many of our older folk may remember. Kevin's last starring role was as *Prospero* in the school performances of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.

By 1975 Kevin and Michael were attending Solihull Methodist Church and playing active roles in youth activities under the care of the Baileys and the Giles. Kevin and Michael were part of a large group of both boys and girls, known as 'the Lads', getting involved in voluntary work and fun-filled holidays together – one to Switzerland being particularly memorable. The Lads kept in touch - latterly with Kevin administering their WhatsApp group - and, as late as last year, he organized a reunion here in Solihull.

In 1982, Kevin went off to Manchester, where he gained a degree in business studies and was active in the Methodist Society and the drama group, appearing in public performances of *Godspell*. Once again, he made lifelong friendships with his housemates Dicken, John, and Nick.

He then qualified as a Chartered Accountant with the firm now known as *KPMG*, before moving to *National Home Loans* in Homer Road. Rosemary Dickinson was also a member of the Lads, and Kevin married her at our church. Two years later, they welcomed twin daughters Jessica and Leanne into the world. After spending several weeks in hospital, the girls were baptised at Solihull Methodist Church.



Meanwhile, following a banking crisis, Kevin was asked to lead the recovery of the *National Mortgage Bank* when it was off-loaded by the government, and later formed and chaired a new company – *New Life Mortgages* - offering equity release, which was very successful.

He was always interested in music and show business, attending events, and sponsoring the prog rock band, *Mostly Autumn*. He was also supportive of Jess's quest to attend every Jane MacDonald concert, and Leanne's involvement with the BBC – both her work on *The Archers*, and later her playwriting.

About ten years ago, following his and Rosemary's divorce, serious health problems led to Kevin retiring from business and, over the next few years, he spent several weeks in various hospitals. As he got things under control, he devoted as much time as he could to church work, notably chaplaincy at the NEC, the work of Birmingham

International Student Homes, Open the Book, SMASH, projector and streaming work, and lettings. Indeed, he was on his way to an Open the Book session on the 30th of January when he collapsed and was rushed to Heartlands, where he passed away only a few hours later.

Kevin was charming, enthusiastic, friendly and very talented. He was a man who would rarely say no to any request for help. Those of us who knew him will remember his great sense of humour. Word spread so quickly at the news of his passing and the announcement in church left a very shocked silence.

Let us continue to pray for his friends and relatives. We ask God's blessing on his good soul.



Kevin with Jessica and Leanne

Ray Dickinson

Ray was born on 17th April 1935 in Retford Nottinghamshire to parents Winnifred and Leonard. He was the eldest of two children, having one younger brother, Noel. He attended King Edward's Grammar School in Retford. He went on to the University of Leeds to study Accounting. He was a member of the Methodist Society and this is where he met his future wife, Ursula. Even at University, Ray was interested in music and singing, performing in shows such as Pirates of Penzance in 1955. Ursula went to see him in that performance, and noticed that he kept raising his eyebrows at her throughout the play.

They married in 1960, and settled in Mansfield. In 1963 they welcomed Rosemary into the world and Andrew 13 months later in 1964. In late 1964, when Andrew was only a few months old, the family moved back to Kirkstone for a year to live with Ursula's parents while their new house in Holcombe Brook was being built. The family moved to Solihull in 1968. They lived in Sharmans Cross Road and attended Solihull Methodist Church every week and became core members of the congregation, with Ray doing the church's accounting for many years. He had also been a church steward.

Ray's career in Accountancy was very important to him - he worked hard and gave every job his full dedication and commitment - always endeavouring to do his very best and to his own very high standards.

His first job was at Hobbs, Jackson & Ward accountants as an articled clerk & audit manager. In 1959 he moved to work at Metal Box, before moving to Peat Marwick Mitchell & Co in 1964. In the Manchester office, Ray worked as a management consultant, and in 1968 changed roles, moving to the Birmingham office to become Midland Region Consultancy Manager. In 1972, Ray moved to Kenrick and Jefferson in West Bromwich where he worked as Finance Director, taking over as Managing Director in 1989. In August 1992, Ray was appointed as director West Bromwich Building Society and in 1998 he was promoted to Chairman.

Ray and Ursula were a devoted couple who had long and happy marriage - celebrating their fortieth and fiftieth wedding anniversaries at the St John's hotel. Sadly in 1993, Ursula suffered a major stroke which left her with significant disabilities. Ray gave up his job at Kenrick & Jefferson to look after her full time, a role which he took on with selfless determination and a wish to do his very best for her. He never complained and was committed to give her the best life possible. Very sadly in January 2014, Ursula passed away. Ray coped by keeping busy and taking on more responsibility with his voluntary roles.

Family tragedy continued when Rosemary died from breast cancer in August 2018. Understandably Ray said that he had never got over her death - he said of her "Rosemary was like a ray of sun, shining on us and all about her".



Just as work had been extremely important to Ray, so too were his post-retirement activities and he was actively engaged in a number of committees. In 1992 he became a Director of Viceroy Close Ltd and worked hard to support the work of the Committee and also Chairing the Residents Association. He was also a member of the Rotary Club and over the years acted as Treasurer, President, and trustee of the Rotary Endowment Trust.

Ray had been a member of the Chandos Choir for around fifty years, including holding a variety of committee roles such as Chairman and Treasurer. He would have been delighted that the Chandos Choir were able to sing at his Thanksgiving Service.

Throughout Ray's life, his friends and family were always very important to him and he enjoyed very many lunches and get togethers over the years. He would meet up with family and friends from across the country, including attending family reunions and yearly trips away. Ray's last trip was to the Lake District in October 2023 to meet up with his sister in law, Carolyn and close family friends. This had been a regular yearly event in which three families: the Prestons, Tattersalls and Stansfields decided to keep in touch following the death of Ursula's mother in 1998.

Ray was extremely proud of his four beautiful grand-daughters Jess, Leanne, Katie and Lucy.

He will be very sadly missed by all who knew him and will leave a "Ray shaped hole" in many lives. His generosity and kindness knew no bounds, he had integrity, resilience and a determination to do the right thing. He was described by many as lovely person and one of life's gentlemen. He had a great sense of humour, was entertaining, extremely funny and a "scream". Always young at heart and sassy. As a husband, father, grandfather, father in law, relative, friend and colleague he was the very best!!

Ray was Kevin Allen's father in law

Minister's Message for April

Dear Friends

Greetings to you in Christ's name.

Did you know there is no real basis for Lent found in the Bible. Lent is a church instituted season. However, in the book *Keep a True Lent*, by Charles Fillmore, the idea has a sound spiritual basis. Moses, Elijah, and Jesus himself set a precedent for it. Each observed a forty-day period of prayer and fasting as a preparation for **spiritual work**.

It should be noted that the number forty is frequently used in the Bible to indicate a completed preparation for something to follow. Lent is a true season of preparation for Easter. It is a time of fasting, denial, giving up or picking up something, giving up something not good for and picking up good habits, walking someone's dog, making a phone call to someone housebound every week/month or being a member of a church committee/a steward/ letting secretary/ catering, pastoral etc.

Lent can be an excellent time for self-examination, self-discipline, and self-commitment; a time to work with habit patterns in thought and to create new personal ways of being and expression; a time of preparation for the awakening of the soul, much like nature getting plant life ready to burst forth in the springtime. The very word, "Lent," is derived from a word meaning "springtime." So, during Lent we can experience **springtime in our souls** – the budding of new ideas and the unfolding of new awareness. We can manifest inner growth that comes from using our energy"

Let us use our energy for SOLIHULL METHODIST CHURCH. We all know that a joyless church is one that is dying out". Let us remember this so that Solihull will not die. A church rich in joy is a genuine gift from above to brothers and

sisters who know how to ask for it and to accept one another as we are, committing themselves to church life, trusting in the action of the Spirit. I pray that our Church must strip away every action that is not for God or any action without love.



- Let us strip away the fear of opening our doors and going out to encounter all, especially people who are different from us, the poor, the needy, the remote and the strangers.
- Let us not get lost in the shipwreck of the world,
- Let us bear with courage the light of Christ, the light of the Gospel, even in the darkness, where one can't see, where one might stumble.

Many times, we are afraid of the newness/change that the Holy Spirit brings to us. We shouldn't be afraid of the renewal of structures of our church. Jesus teaches us the freedom we need always to find the newness of the Gospel in our life and in structures.

I want to encourage all of us not to privatise love; love belongs to God and God is public, so love must be public in the church, streets and in our community.

I ask you all to pray for some of our church members who have lost their loved ones recently.

In the life of the church, we are very saddened that our friends Kevin Allen, Ray Dickinson and Eric Fawthrop have passed away, they will sadly be missed by their families, church & friends in the community.

Peace & Joy
Rev. Molly

Help needed

There are many jobs carried out to make sure that Solihull Methodist Church runs smoothly. Could you help in any of these areas:

- ❖ Catering - helping to prepare and serve refreshments
- ❖ Lettings Manager - booking rooms and welcoming group leaders
- ❖ Stewards - support the life and mission of the church as it grows
- ❖ Young Church admin - supporting the young people in the church with admin skills

If you want more details of what is involved and could help in one of these roles, please speak to a steward.



Palm crosses were lifted high during the final hymn on Palm Sunday after the moving cantata 'God so Loved' by the community choir.

Church Council Report

The Church Council met on 4 March 2024. This was the meeting that had been postponed from 5 February due to Rev Molly's unavailability due to jury service.

- The paperwork necessary to register the Church for same-sex marriages was being completed. Church Council voted to ask for registration of marriages to be extended to situations where people are housebound or are in hospital.
- It was agreed that Roger Wellings should join the Church, Life and Mission committee, and that Peter Farndon should become chair of the Worship Consultation committee.
- Kevin Allen had died suddenly in January. Rev Molly noted his strong involvement with a variety of Church activities and then led prayers for Kevin and his family following a short silence in his memory.
- Various reports from Church committees had been circulated beforehand and these were noted and accepted.
- The (draft) annual trustees' report was presented. The small surplus for the year 2022/3 was noted. The report was approved so that it can be sent to the auditors along with a "letter of representation" declaring that everything has been done correctly.
- A proposed policy of retaining 3-5 months of typical annual expenditure in case of unforeseen circumstances was approved.
- Comparing the financial position for the first four months of the current financial year with the same months of the previous year, unsurprisingly it was seen that expenses were increasing. This meant that a small deficit was predicted by the end of the current financial year. It was

noted that rates for lettings were being increased by 10% to try to ease the situation. However, additional funds were still required to allow some costs to be met from the general fund as had been planned. All these factors had prompted the presentation to the congregation during the morning service on 18 February.

- A small group reviewing lettings had produced an interim report which was accepted. Grateful thanks were expressed to those who had worked together in creating the report and in ensuring that the lettings process continued in an orderly manner.
- A proposal to make the assistance provided for financial issues into a temporary paid post for nine months was agreed and passed to the Ways and Means committee to take forward.
- The Church's safeguarding policy had been updated using the model policy on the Connexion's web-site as a model. Clarification is being sought regarding two areas of concern: (a) transport rotas and the document checking advised by the Connexion; and (b) risk assessments for Church group activities. The Church Council gave approval to the safeguarding policy (excluding the two areas).
- Four applications had been received for the post of pastoral support worker. Two candidates had been interviewed and a letter of intent to appoint had been sent to the preferred candidate. The necessary background checks were now being made.
- The Greener Church group noted that the Gold Award might still be available. A Rocha had asked whether a visit by them to the Church site might be of help and this offer was being taken up.

Glen Mullineux

Church AGM

Sunday 28th April

1.30 pm

Hear what is happening in the church and elect stewards and church council members.

This will be preceded by a

Church Family Lunch

12.30 pm

Prepared by the Catering Committee

All are welcome

Church Council Nominations

Nominations are now needed for the church council. Do you want to find out how the church works? Do you want to be involved in decision making for the church? Then this could be a role for you.

To be on the council you need to be

- A church member
- Available for 3 meetings a year in the evening
- Prepared to be a trustee of the church
- Able to consider the views of the whole church when making decisions at meetings

The role is for 3 years. Nomination forms are available from cc.secretary@solihull-methodist.org.uk and must be completed by Sunday 21st April

For more information speak to one of the stewards or Helen Banks, the church council secretary.

Church Project

Matthew Rusike Children's Home (MRCH)



Open Gardens

To run an Open Gardens afternoon in the summer (July or August) we need some gardens to visit.

Could you offer your garden to be visited? It would be good to have a variety of gardens, large or small

If you can help please contact Lawrie Rumens.



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SOLIHULL METHODIST CHURCH
BIG BAKE
SATURDAY 20 APRIL 2024
3:30PM

ENTER YOUR MARVELLOUS CREATIONS AND JOIN US FOR AN AFTERNOON OF FUN, TEA AND CAKE!

CATEGORIES

UNDER 6 YEARS OLD
 4 X DECORATED BISCUITS, RICH TEA OR DIGESTIVE

7 - 11 YEARS OLD
 6 X HOMEMADE BISCUITS, ANYTHING GOES!

11 - 16 YEARS OLD
 6 X FAIRY CAKES

17 - 100+
 FRUIT CAKE, VICTORIA SANDWICH, YOUR SPECIALITY

ENTRIES TO BE HANDED IN BY 3PM ON THE DAY!

ALL PROCEEDS WILL GO TOWARDS THE MATTHEW RUSIKE CHILDREN'S HOME (MRCH)

SOLIHULL METHODIST CHURCH PRESENTS...

FUN QUIZ WITH A DIFFERENCE...

Quingo

SATURDAY 27 APRIL 2024

JOIN US FROM 6:30PM

£12.00 PER PERSON AND INCLUDES A FISH AND CHIP SUPPER

TEAMS OF 6 - 8 PEOPLE

PURCHASE YOUR TICKETS FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE BY 17 APRIL TO GUARANTEE YOUR FOOD ORDER

ALL PROFITS WILL GO TOWARDS THE MATTHEW RUSIKE CHILDREN'S HOME (MRCH)

If you would like to support this charity directly you can donate to:

Friends of Matthew Rusike Children's Home

Bank: Co-operative Bank
 Sort Code: 08-92-99
 Account Number: 65869309

Please note any direct donation to MRCH will not be counted as part of the church project.

Future Fund Raising Events

Sunday 5 th May	Allen's marathon run
Saturday 18 th May	Barn Dance
Saturday 1 st June	Allen's Snowdon climb
Saturday 6 th July	Concert
Sunday 11 th August	BBQ service
<i>Note date change</i>	
<i>To be confirmed</i>	<i>Open gardens</i>

Fellowship Lunch

On Sunday 3rd March the Fowgay Housegroup cooked a 3 course lunch which included roast pork, for those at church who would be going home on their own for Sunday lunch. It was an excellent meal and very much appreciated by those who were invited to attend. Here are a few pictures, especially of those working hard in the kitchen.



“Extraordinary Love”. This is the theme for Christian Aid week 2024 and, as ever, one way in which we respond to God’s extraordinary love for us here in Solihull is by joining in the Christian Aid Coffee Morning, which will be held on Saturday 11th May. Our wonderful group of volunteers are preparing once again, but we need plenty of people to come and enjoy the day with us.

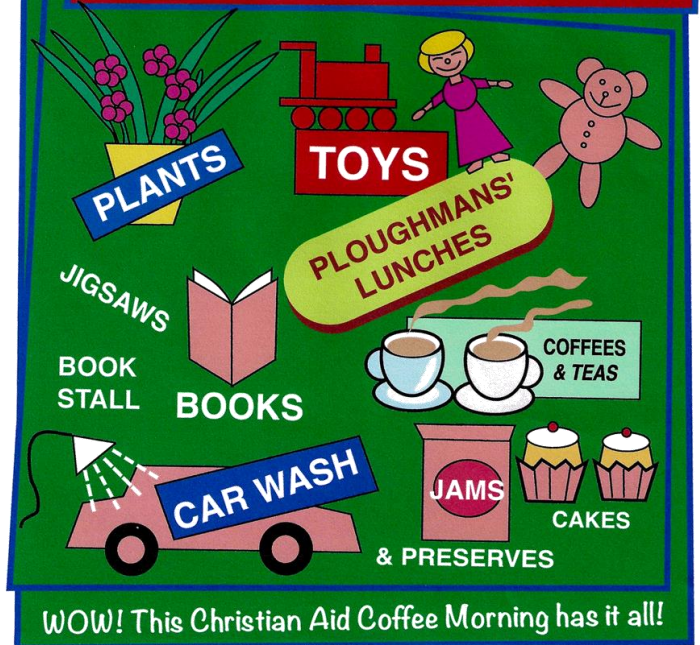
Each year Christian Aid points us to a particular person whose story illustrates something of the work which we’re supporting. This year we’re thinking about Aline, who lives in the East African state of Burundi. She was married as a child and then experienced domestic abuse, homelessness and severe poverty. She was brought to a point where she says that ‘people forgot I was human’. But Aline’s love for her children, and her experience of God’s love, filled her with exceptional courage. She was determined to give her children a better life and to help her neighbours. With Christian Aid’s support she was able to set up her own business in trading avocados and peanuts, and was able to help her neighbours also.

Last year our coffee morning raised an amazing £2630. Can we match it, or do even better, this year? Come and support us.



Saturday 11th May: 10am-2pm

SOLIHULL METHODIST CHURCH HALL



WOW! This Christian Aid Coffee Morning has it all!

Scout Badges

The Scouts have badges for geocaching and writing so Matthew has written this article to gain both of these badges. Good luck Matthew.



Geocaching

What is geocaching?

Geocaching is a worldwide treasure hunt. The aim is to find as many geocaches as you can. It's a game with endless fun. There are geocaches all over the world you can find. You do not even need to pay, unless you want to become a Premium Member to unlock even more fun. Caches, which are containers waiting to be found using GPS signals on hand held devices or phones. However, this GPS signal can be disrupted by trees and other overhead objects at times which makes it harder!

You will need : the app is called Geocaching and this can be found on the Google Play Store or Apple App Store, pen or pencil, tweezers however in my geocaching bag I have note pads, a first aid kit ,a torch, gardening gloves and snacks ... Mmm!!!!!!! In the geocaches there are pieces of paper for you to sign and date this is, so the cache owner knows you are not cheating.

Traditional caches:

Traditional caches are small containers hidden anywhere. Chances are you have walked past one before without realising. On the map they are green circles. They range in difficulty and terrain so if the difficulty is high, it will be harder than a lower difficulty. If it is a higher terrain count it will be harder to get to than a lower terrain count.

Multi caches:

Multi caches are a bit harder. The original coordinates are not where the cache is it is where an object with information is you need to find the answers to the questions. The answer is usually a number that is replaced by a letter. You need to work out what the number is that replaces the letter for your coordinates. You do this until you have got all the letters. Then using the numbers, you do the calculations resulting in your final coordinates. Then go and find it.

Mystery caches:

Mystery caches are puzzle caches where you need to solve a problem to find the final co-ordinates. The puzzles vary in difficulty and complexity, and often the cache is a short distance away. You do not need to be at the co-ordinates to solve the puzzles. Some of the mystery caches are set out in pictures on the map. My favourite is Homer Simpson and all

of the puzzles are to do with the Simpsons. This is called "GeoArt". These puzzles can be anything: sudoku, crosswords, logic puzzles, riddles, jigsaws and pictures.

Geocaching Community:

In the geocaching community there are many helpful people who can answer any questions or give assistance with puzzles or hiding your own caches. There are many meet ups, locally and nationally. These range from meals (that I like to go to!) to litter picking events, as well as camping events. These can all earn you geocaches and souvenirs.

Trackables and Swag:

Trackables and swag can be found in larger geocaches. The largest cache that I have found was a large ammunition tin in a log pile at the side of a field. Within this, like many other larger caches, there was swag which can be swapped and some trackables. A trackable is a small character, with a sequence of numbers and letters that identifies it, and often a mission for the trackable. I have launched a trackable called Henry the Hedgehog who has travelled 10491 miles to date, although he is currently missing in action!

All in all Geocaching is inclusive to all no matter what age you are or what abilities you have. It is an amazing way to get out and enjoy the world, both in cities and the countryside. I feel better after going out and finding as many geocaches as I can giving purpose to my walk and exploring places that I would not of known that existed.

Matthew Lamb aged 10^{1/2}



World Mission Fund supports United Church in Zambia response to Cholera Epidemic



As Methodist people our way of life commitment is to 'Care for ourselves and others around us.' That is important on a personal, local and global scale. The World Mission Fund is one way Methodists in Britain are sharing in that work of caring for our Methodist and Uniting Church community around the world.

This is one story of that partnership in caring for people caught up in a Cholera epidemic in Zambia.

The United Church of Zambia provides health care across Zambia, running four mission hospitals and seven clinics, located both in urban and isolated rural areas in all corners of the country. The Methodist Church in Britain is proud to support this ministry through the World Mission Fund and the Health Secretary for the United Church of Zambia.

In recent months, there has been a serious outbreak of Cholera in Zambia. The majority of cases occurred in December 2023 and January 2024 with over 13,600 cases in the worst hit area alone – Lusaka. Since October 2023, the country's Health Ministry recorded a fatality rate of 4% which is 4 times the World Health Organisation threshold for the disease. In January 2024, the Government closed all schools and opened emergency centres to try to contain the growing epidemic. Today, schools remain closed and there is considerable fear amongst citizens, especially in areas of high population density.

The Health Department of the United Church of Zambia is determined to play its part in contributing to the effort to combat the epidemic. Given that poor sanitation is one of the primary means of transmission of the disease, the Health Department reflected carefully on what actions it could implement to assist in addressing the crisis. In an analysis of its institutions, it discovered that three of its main health clinics in Lusaka have inadequate sanitary facilities. Therefore, in order to set an example to the wider community and help contain transmission, the Health Department have decided to build new sanitation blocks in 3 Health clinics in the most densely populated areas of the city where the outbreak is at its worst. These blocks will include flushing toilets and washing facilities for both men and women in each of the clinics.

All the staff and patients in the three clinics in the most populated areas of Lusaka city, which receive large numbers of patients, will benefit. The project aims to address the root cause of the cholera outbreak, to contain the spread of the disease amongst all those who use these clinics in the most populated areas of the city. It will provide long-term healthy hygiene for staff and patients into the future, so providing protection from future outbreaks

The World Mission Fund has disbursed £10,600 to the United Church of Zambia to cover these costs.

UKMED

At Soupa Talks in March Professor Stephen Chadwick from the Middlesex Hospital, London covered the work of UKMED. It is a frontline medical charity that gives life-saving healthcare in response to conflicts, disasters and crises worldwide.

UKMED's first response was in 1988 when a group of doctors responded to the earthquake in Armenia. Their most recent ventures have been in Zambia with the cholera epidemic and the wars in Ukraine and Gaza. They have just set up a field hospital in Gaza.

Soupa Talks



Not only do they provide emergency support and medicines but train national healthcare workers to continue their work using up to date methods. They attained charitable status in 1995. Before NHS health workers go abroad they go through intensive training reflecting the dangerous situations they could face such as kidnap and working under fire.

Soupa Talks raised £300 in donations and the money raised from the Anniversary Tea in May will also go to support the work of UKMED



10th Anniversary Cream Tea

To celebrate Soupa Talks 10th anniversary we will be having a cream tea in the church on

Wednesday 8th May, 3.00 pm

There will be entertainment by
Who let the Ukes out?

Tickets £10
All proceeds will go to UKMED



Water for Peace

Before lighting the Peace and Hope Candle on Sunday 17th March, Richard Balmer highlighted the UN World Water Day on the coming Friday. He said:

This year it is focussed on the international conflicts over water, and the need, as with so much in today's world, to find some way to share what is a limited resource.

It must sound strange to think water is a limited resource when we often seem to have too much rather than too little, but we, like the rest of the world, rely on the sun to act as a huge desalination plant, drawing clean water into rain clouds, and clouds to drop that clean water over land.

Most goes down rivers, some sinks into the ground and moves slowly downhill, some coming out in springs or being taken out at wells or boreholes. Often this water crosses national boundaries and, especially at times of drought, and where populations are rising, there is not enough to go round. People need water in their homes and many need far larger quantities to grow their food.

Upstream countries have the advantage. The biblical Tigris and Euphrates Rivers start in Turkey and run into Syria and Iraq. Turkey has built dams for its own farmers which now threaten downstream farmers' livelihoods. China is building

dams on the Mekong River which flows into Vietnam. This is reducing the flow in the Mekong Delta allowing sea water to encroach further affecting crop production. Israel has been over-pumping the groundwater it shares with Gaza so sea water is seeping in from the Mediterranean making Gaza water more saline. Egypt has threatened to destroy a new dam being built in Ethiopia because it will reduce the water they need. More than 50 countries are said to be at risk of conflict over water.

So, what can we do? Support aid which goes to family planning programmes. Think twice about buying food grown in drought affected countries like Spain – we are using their water - where there are alternatives here. And pray that the Christian message, that the World is a family which needs to share, gets into the minds of our world leaders.

This prayer followed:

Dear Lord, We know that we are casually using more of your planet's resources, including water, than it can spare. And we know that conflicts will get worse if we just carry on this way. Please help our leaders to find ways to share those resources and help us to give them our support. Amen

April Month of Prayer at Shirley

The Church Council at Shirley Methodist Church are inviting everyone to pray for the church in April. They would love as many people to get involved as possible. There will be prayers in our worship services, prayers and prayer stations in the chapel, and a prayer booklet to help get started.



Green Matters Caring for God's Creation

Now you can recycle Crisp Packets and More

Here is some VERY GOOD NEWS. For years we have only been able to recycle particular forms of plastic, such as the slightly stiff plastic used for milk bottles. Now the range has been hugely extended to take all kinds of 'soft' plastics like food bags. Bins are spreading over the country and being installed in the larger supermarkets. The one shown is in Waitrose and can be found on the left hand side as you walk from the car park into the shop.

5 categories are listed on the bin:

- ✓ **crisp packets**
- ✓ **sweet wrappers**
- ✓ **plastic film** (for example that stretched on the top of food containers)
- ✓ **any plastics bags**
- ✓ **food pouches.**

Just to be clear, this list includes items such as toilet roll wrappers, freezer bags, bubble wrap, cling film, carrier bags and bread bags.

I believe similar bins can be found in Sainsbury's and Tesco. Please let me know of other locations.



Our Recycling Totals continue to mount

The church started a recycling service in the summer of 2009, almost 15 years ago. Most of the items we recycle could have been recycled at shops or the Bickenhill 'tip' but would have often meant making special journeys. Having boxes at church can be more convenient for members of the congregation and the many people who use our rooms during the week and save many individual trips. And so, it has proved.

At our last meeting in early March we reached these amazing totals:

- batteries 93,351;
- Glasses 5,597;
- Printer cartridges 10,783;
- mobile phones 950;
- digital cameras 42.

Over the 15 years we have also recycled other electronic items, recycled jewellery and foreign currency and arranged one-off collections of suits, shoes, clothes. Jenni Kitson continues to recycle stamps and the Autumn TWAM collecting has now become an annual event.

So, thank you all for your support.

Vestibule recycling boxes

Just a note to say that the recycling boxes in the vestibule now seem to have found a permanent home: under the shelf on the 'pulpit' side of the doors into the church.

More Recycling

We are still collecting items for Recycling for Good Causes - the good cause being Transform Trade (the successor to Traidcraft). Transform Trade is a global community of farmers, workers, collectives, campaigners, donors and supporters, which work together for trade that values people over profit.

Thank you for the mobile phones which are still being collected (21 between November 2023 and March 2024) but please note the following items would also be welcome:

- ✓ broken or no longer used **jewellery** of any kind



CC BY-NC

- ✓ **bank notes and coins** of any country, any denomination, or any date



- ✓ **watches**



CC BY-SA-NC

If you have any of the above items that you would like to donate please see Linda Innes after a Sunday morning service

Richard Balmer: On behalf of the Greener Church Group: John and Linda Innes, Pam Beattie, Bryan Fitter, Anthony Gough, Sue Kelley, Derek Giles, Sue and Richard Balmer, Glen Mullineux.



Last chance to buy tickets to see
our Church's musical theatre
group's latest production

The Farndale Avenue Housing Estate
Townswomen's Guild Operatic Society's
production of

THE MIKADO

What could possibly
go wrong?



Please check last minute availability online:
ticketsource.co.uk/smash

Friday-Sunday 12-14th April 2024
Dovehouse Theatre, Langley School

Friday and Saturday at 7:30 pm; Saturday and Sunday at 2:30 pm



AFTERNOON TEA

Fundraising for



SUNDAY 21 APRIL 2 - 5PM

**WREN HALL, SCHOOL LANE
WROXALL, CV35 7NE**

www.shineyouth.org.uk

SHINE YOUTH

restoring hope

SHINE YOUTH is Christian charity in Solihull with whom volunteers from many of the local churches provide listening and mentoring support to 11 - 18 year olds experiencing mental health and wellbeing difficulties like anxiety and bereavement.

They are fundraising to continue and to expand this work as it is in high demand in schools and at their Youth Wellbeing Cafe in Shirley.

Need to talk to your minister?

You don't need to go through anyone.
I am here for everyone and
just a phone call away, feel free, please ring
07878 757024, Rev Molly

Anxious? Concerned?

Contact the confidential
Prayer Chain
via Chris Giles
via the church office



Church Team



Rev Molly Chitokwindo
Minister
Day off - Friday



Abi Godfree
Children, Youth and
Families worker



Diane Webb
Pastoral and Community Worker



Janice Smith
Church Administrator
Tuesday - Friday



Chris Giles
Pastoral Coordinator

Church Office
0121 705 7367



www.solihull-methodist.org.uk

The Messenger Team

Pete Austin, Sue Balmer, Rev Molly Chitokwindo,
Bryan Fitter, Jeff Horton, Sue Kelley,
Glen Mullineux, and Lawrie Rumens
Please send material for publication to
messenger@solihull-methodist.org.uk We reserve the
right to edit articles if necessary.
Please send photographs **separately** as jpeg files

**NB. Last date for May Messenger items is
Sunday 14th April**

April Diary

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3 9.30 Morning prayers by Zoom	4 8.15 Badminton	5 6.30 Youth Club	6
7 10.30 Morning service	8 9.45 Pushchair Club 10.00 Shall we talk? 7.30 Scouts	9 9.30 Communion 10.15 Contact Choir 10.30 Men's Coffee 10.30 Bible Study 5.00 Rainbows 6.00 Brownies	10 9.30 Morning prayers by Zoom 10.30 Classic Cantonese Fellowship in church 1.00 Soupa Talks	11 6.00 Beavers 6.30 Cubs 8.15 Badminton	12 10.30 Friendship Café 6.30 Youth Club 7.30 Mikado	13 2.30 Mikado 7.30 Mikado
14 10.30 Morning service with communion 2.30 Mikado	15 9.45 Pushchair Club 10.00 Shall we talk? 7.30 Scouts	16 9.30 Communion 10.15 Contact Choir 10.30 Bible Study 10.30 Men's coffee 5.00 Rainbows 6.00 Brownies	17 9.30 Morning prayers by Zoom	18 9.30 Ramble 6.00 Beavers 6.30 Cubs 8.15 Badminton	19 10.30 Classic Cantonese Fellowship in church hall 6.30 Youth Club	20 3.30 Big Bake
21 10.30 Morning service	22 9.45 Pushchair Club 10.00 Shall we talk? 7.30 Scouts	23 9.30 Communion 10.15 Contact Choir 10.30 Men's Coffee 10.30 Bible Study 5.00 Rainbows 6.00 Brownies	24 9.30 Morning prayers by Zoom 10.30 Classic Cantonese Fellowship in church	25 6.00 Beavers 6.30 Cubs 8.15 Badminton	26 10.30 Friendship Café 6.30 Youth Club	27 6.30 Quingo with Fish and Chip Supper
28 10.30 Morning service 12.30 Church Family Lunch 1.30 Church AGM 6.30 Healing service with communion	29 9.45 Pushchair Club 10.00 Shall we talk? 7.30 Scouts	30 9.30 Communion 10.15 Contact Choir 10.30 Men's Coffee 10.30 Bible Study 5.00 Rainbows 6.00 Brownies				

Joint Public Issues Team

Webinar: Act on Poverty

Thursday 18th April, 7.00 – 8.30

Act on Poverty: Holding successful meeting with MPs and candidates

It will be an online briefing and training session, to help you plan and prepare to meet with Members of Parliament and Parliamentary candidates to discuss how to make UK and global poverty a priority ahead of the coming General Election.

Join for practical tips and ideas for holding successful meetings in advance of the General Election that can make a real difference.

Let's come together to create positive change in our communities and our world.

Book your place by emailing enquiries@jpit.uk



Amplify 2024

We had a really good weekend at Amplify, 12 Young people and 4 leaders attended. The centre was set up brilliantly, with dormitories, dining hall with kitchens, worship space and adventure activities.

We entered into all and thoroughly enjoyed it all.

The discussion points were set around justice and hope for a better world. Our young people took this very seriously and rose to the challenge. There was deep concern for our world and societies failings were aired. The young people had opportunities to do something about it. They wrote to MPs or large corporations to challenge them. They made placards and debated the subjects.

I am truly honoured to have been trusted by our families and young people to facilitate this to happen. It was such honest investment by each and every one.

I remain in awe of our young people.

Abi

