



Messenger

Solihull Methodist Church

February 2024

Lent Breakfasts



The first two breakfast meetings in February are organised by Churches Together in Central Solihull. They will follow last year's Lent theme when we looked at hospitality for the stranger.

The four meetings in March will be using the booklet produced by The Methodist Church. 'Sunshine and showers – Prayer's beautiful messiness'.



There will be Lent breakfasts again on each Saturday morning during Lent. The first two will be in the church hall and the last four will be held in the church.

They will start at 8.30 am with breakfast to be followed by the talk and it is expected that they will finish by 9.30 am. The catering committee will be providing the breakfast.

Your donation will be welcome to defray the costs of approximately £3 per person.

| Date | Venue | Speaker | Organisation | Topic |
|-------------|--------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| 17 February | Hall | Felix Kupay | Entraide | Supporting refugees and asylum seekers |
| 24 February | Hall | John Bradley | Solihull Borough of Sanctuary Group | The work of the group |
| 2 March | Church | Rev Molly Chitokwindo | SMC | Prayer as friendship |
| 9 March | Church | Rev Chris Giles | SMC | Prayer as rhythm |
| 16 March | Church | Rev Peter Bates | SMC | Forms of prayer |
| 23 March | Church | Rev Donald Ker | SMC | When prayer is hard |

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Church Family News



Alistair John was born 30 December 2023 - new grandson to Howard and Stella and son to Christine.

Births

Cyrus Stephan was born on 9th January. He is the son of Dave and Irini, brother to Sophia Ionna, 2nd grandchild to Steve and Janice and 7th great grandchild for Ivy and Stan.



70th Birthday

Chris Tucker celebrated his 70th birthday before Christmas on 5th December. We hope he had a happy day.



Death

Eleonore Beaton died on 7th December in a nursing home in Knaresborough, where she had recently moved to be nearer to her son, Martin. Her funeral was held at Harrogate Crematorium on 28th December. It was streamed online so those of us in Solihull who knew Eleonore were able to join it.



Eleonore was 88 years old when she died and she had lived a very full life. She was born in 1935 in Silesia, south east Germany where the border over the years was moved between East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Poland and back again. She and her family suffered when it came under Russian influence after the war. She had a very difficult time getting to West Germany. She felt that her faith had helped her through that very hard experience.

She came to London when she was 20 with a friend and met her future husband there. They lived in Tehran for 4 years and then moved back to England. There was also a spell in Switzerland, before settling in Solihull.

Not long after they came to Solihull her husband was ill and she had to look after him for quite a time.

Eleonore was a very sociable lady and did voluntary work for the NSPCC. She was always happy and never complained.

Welcome



We welcome **Ian and Deborah Hancock** as members of Solihull Methodist Church. They have recently transferred their church membership from Lyndon to Solihull.

Thank you

The Weatherup family would like to thank everyone for their cards, thoughts, prayers and flowers following the death of Jane's father. They have all been very much appreciated

Prayer Box

We pray for:

- ❖ Rev Molly and the family, in a time of family bereavement
- ❖ Jane and Tim Weatherup and the family, following Jane's father's death
- ❖ Joy Wadsworth, as she settles into her new home in Devon
- ❖ Michael Bennett, recovering slowly after a spell in hospital over Christmas
- ❖ Marjorie Evans, as she continues to recover after a stay in hospital following a fall
- ❖ New friends joining our church family



Tim Iles

(February 1962 – November 2023)

Tim was born on Valentine's Day 1962. He worked in the family business - first the village pharmacy in Hampton and then in Sparkhill, which was one of the three pharmacies that Tim's parents co-owned. About 15 years ago he sold up and became a locum dispenser.

He was a bell-ringer at Hampton for over 30 years, a hobby which became a passion. He also enjoyed sport. Some years ago he planned to visit every county cricket ground that summer by train. He travelled far and wide to watch both cricket and rugby, not just in this country but internationally too, including both Australia and New Zealand.

Tim was committed to his parents and to the family business and that gives a sense of his loyalty, always offering support. After the loss of his father, Tim spent many years living with and more latterly caring for his mother and was often seen pushing Marjorie in her wheelchair.

Tim would have loved a golden retriever, but sadly his wish went unfulfilled, perhaps because he had been a working man or because he loved holidays and it left less time for a pet. He supported Guide Dogs for the Blind.

The Iles family were members of our church, and for many years Tim mailed the Messenger each month. He was a circuit treasurer for a time and willingly volunteered to help with front-of-house for SMASH, helping to make things happen in his own, quiet and unassuming way.

Tim had a sharp and dry sense of humour and was interested in politics and current affairs. He was a humble, quiet and shy man, who underestimated his importance and significance. His interest in other people was genuine and well-intentioned and exemplified an unselfish nature, which was reflected in his



work, helping others, providing a vital service dispensing medicines. The illness which overtook him swiftly was stoically borne. He didn't complain, despite the obvious pain and discomfort that he was in, and was quick to praise the nursing staff in hospital.

Let us all thank God for this kind and modest gentleman who served others so faithfully.

Rev David Blanchflower

Service of Thanksgiving

A group from Solihull travelled to Cambridge for the Service of Thanksgiving for David's life and ministry. David was minister at Solihull Methodist Church from 1995 to 2003, when he was 'lifted out' to become Superintendent in the Belper Circuit. The service was a celebration.

Some of you will have watched the live streaming of the service, and shared in the memories of Sean and Peter of their father, recounting his background in Salford, leaving school at 15, his life changing visit to Iona leading him to candidate for the ministry, and his second visit there, when he was to meet Jenny, marrying in 1970. They shared his passion for Manchester United and the Labour Party, his desire for a socially just world and his mischievous sense of humour.

The magnificent address was from Rev. Rachel Blanchflower, David's daughter - in-law. David had specifically asked her to give the address, with the comment, when she asked if he was sure about this, he said that she wouldn't have to preach – the hymns would say it all! Indeed, he was right! He had chosen the hymns, much to the family's relief, and they were hymns that spoke of David's faith, but Rachel brought the different elements together in a way that was clear and faith-affirming. Look up these hymns and see how they speak of the presence of God in times of darkness, in all the circumstances of life, the grace of God that is beyond our understanding, and the hope that is ours as we travel on with God as our guide. HP 67 - Lead Kindly Light (sadly not included in StF); StF 638 - Through All the Changing Scenes Of Life; StF 416 - There's A Wideness in God's Mercy; StF 459 - Captain of Israel's Host and Guide.

During the service we heard two poems written by David on the death of his father- A Father's Death (and mine) and A Father's Resurrection (and mine).



It was good to be there to celebrate David's life and ministry, and remember his legacy which continues here at Solihull every Tuesday morning as we use the liturgies he prepared for the Tuesday Communion. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

Rev Peter Bates

Minister's Message for February



Dear friends,

I cannot believe that we are in the last week of the first month of 2024. It so feels strange to wish you a Happy New Year when we are already deep in it, but it is the first-time I engage with you in this manner. Here is wishing you a Happy and Blessed New Year. I pray for God's abundant blessings upon you and for peace in the world. My prayer as we begin this new year is that we will keep our focus on our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Meaning of body language in different cultures. I folded my arms after speaking to someone and he was surprised and said that I was showing negative body language suggesting that I was done with him or closing in.



As the world is becoming a global village it is important to share different meanings and perspectives. In my culture folding arms after speaking means, "I have finished you can speak now". It is like when you have been eating, when you finish you put your fork and knife down as a sign that you are no longer eating.

I said to a friend from another culture, "I met your mum, she is very homely". I was surprised when she then asked me, "What did mum say to you?". I told her nothing and asked her why she asked me that question. She explained that in her culture if you say someone is homely this can mean not interesting or boring. On reflection, this encounter reminded me of the words of St Paul in Romans 12; *"We are one body in union with Christ and we are all*

joined to each other as different parts of one body".

We are different but we belong to each other as we are one in Christ.

Let us continue to serve each other, be tolerant and seek understanding before erroneously judging each other. Being different should make us proud as it makes us stronger and rich in our knowledge.

We continue to give thanks to the Almighty God as we are witnessing a tremendous growth of Solihull Methodist Church. We have had a growth of around 35%. This blessing has presented challenges, we now have to adapt to it. Unfortunately we have had to ask some of our long-standing group users to move rooms and change their times of meeting, which may not have been palatable. Our car park is also struggling to meet our needs. So, I encourage us to be sensible as we park so we maximise the limited space available.

Let us keep praying for each other and keep interceding for others going through difficult times, cost of living, health challenges and wars. God loves us and He will never leave us nor forsake us. Let us always keep our focus on Jesus; He is our strength and comfort. All of us one day might walk through times of darkness, but none of us have to walk through it alone. Jesus Christ is with us.

Peace and Joy

Rev. Molly

Holy Week

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|--|--|
| Palm Sunday 24 March | 10.30 am | The Chancel Choir will sing 'God so loved' | Rev Molly Chitokwindo |
| Monday 25 March | 7.30 pm | Reflection | Rev. Chris Giles |
| Tuesday 26 March | 7.30 pm | Reflection | Rev. Donald Ker |
| Wednesday 27 March | 7.30 pm | Reflection | Rev. Peter Bates |
| Maundy Thursday 28 March | 7.30 pm | Holy Communion | Rev. Molly Chitokwindo/ Rev. Dr. Nadim Nassar |
| Good Friday 29 March | 11.00 am 2.00 pm | Walk of witness Meditation | Rev Molly Chitokwindo |
| Easter Sunday 31 March | 9.00 am 10.30 pm | Easter Breakfast Easter Communion | Rev Molly Chitokwindo |



CC BY-NC

Frankfurt Church Links

Dear friends,
Our friends Rainer and Sabine Jansen have asked if we wish to renew our link with them in their new church in Frankfurt. If you are interested, please contact us about this.
David and Judy Lingard

Church Project Matthew Rusike Children's Home (MRCH)

Out of the Blue Concert

The church project got off to a good start at the beginning of December with a concert by the Out of the Blue Big Band in the church. As you can see from the photo the band were in Christmas mood and they entertained an enthusiastic audience with some great music including a selection of festive numbers to get everyone into the Christmas spirit. A great evening was had by all.



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.

Sponsored Toddle

In early December Pushchair Club did a Sponsored Toddle with the toddlers around the church. They raised the amazing sum of £167.

Future Fund Raising Events

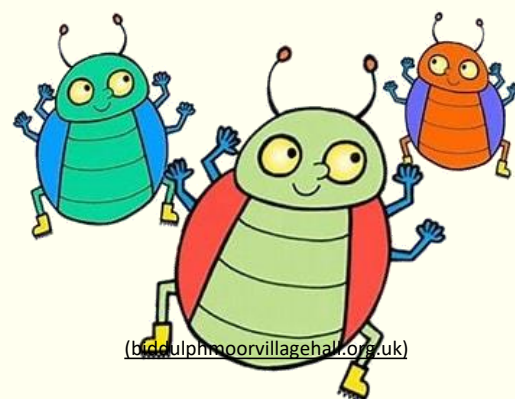
| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Saturday 2 nd March | Beetle Drive |
| Saturday 20 th April | Big Bake Off |
| Sunday 5 th May | Allen's marathon run |
| Saturday 1 st June | Allen's Snowdon climb |
| Saturday 6 th July | Concert |
| Sunday 28 th July | BBQ service |

To be confirmed
Open gardens and barn dance



Proud boys in their new winter uniforms at Matthew Rusike Children's Home

Beetle Drive



Come and join in the fun!
Our Family Beetle Drive for all ages

Saturday 2nd March
6.00 pm

in the Church Hall

with baked potato supper

Tickets (to include supper)
Adult £10 Child £5 Family £30

Christmas at Solihull



Soupa Talks Christmas lunch

Soupa Talks went to the West Midlands Golf Club for their Christmas lunch on Wednesday 6th December. It was very well supported. 50 had booked. As usual the Golf Club gave them a very good lunch. It was a lovely day and everyone enjoyed the beautiful views over the golf course.

Friendship Cafe at Christmas

Friendship Cafe enjoyed a wonderful meal at Hillfield Farm Inn following their last meeting before Christmas. The meal was booked for 1.30pm so there was time for a few more hands of Rummikub before they departed for the Traditional Carvery and Christmas Pudding. Others selected vegetarian main and Cherry bauble dessert. The signature cakes were definitely to write home about and they were provided with a take-out box to enjoy the cake at home. A good time was had by all.



Fellowship Christmas Tea

The Fitter Housegroup put on a Fellowship Tea in the church instead of a Christmas lunch this year. It was very well supported and most enjoyable. The entertainment was given by Two's Company – piano duets played by Jean Hamilton and Graham Lowe. They played a wonderful variety of Christmas music.



Carol singing at Care Homes

Diane Webb organised a group of singers to sing at four care homes in the borough before Christmas. When they were at The Star and Garter Home they were joined by about thirty residents. Peter Handley and Joyce Knight, who are both at The Star and Garter home, were amongst of them. Angels knitted by the congregation were handed out at all the homes and were gratefully received. Many thanks to the knitters.



Candlelight Carol Service

The congregation enjoyed singing many favourite carols and as well as some new ones at the Candlelight Carol Service on Sunday 17 December.

A group of young Hong Kongers treated us to a Cantonese carol as well. When all the candles were lit the church looked very beautiful.

Crib service

The Crib Service was held on the afternoon of Saturday 23 December. The children had plenty of activities at the beginning of the afternoon and then the Christmas story was retold by Abi with Linda Bates painting the story as well. Linda Bates was assisted by a very helpful angel as shown in the picture below.



The donkey heading to Bethlehem with Mary and Joseph



Carol singing outside the station.

For 3 evenings, just before Christmas, there was a hardy band of folk braving the cold, singing carols outside the entrance to the station. They collected £303 from those coming out of the station. They would have collected even more if they had had a card reading machine with them!.

The money raised went to Birmingham Christmas Shelter. This is a local charity that raises funds and recruits volunteers each year to provide local adults, who are homeless, or otherwise alone at Christmas with a free, warm, safe and welcoming place to eat, shower, sleep and enjoy Christmas.





Christingle Service



Our Christingle Service was held in the Church on the afternoon of Saturday 13 January and about thirty people were there – evenly split between children and adults. It was an opportunity to worship by singing some songs and hearing about the meaning of Christmas.

With the assistance of those attending, Rev Molly and Abi explained the significance of the various parts of the Christingle. Next everyone had the opportunity to join in making their own Christingle.

At the end of the service, with the church lights dimmed, the candles in the Christingles were lit. Everyone could then let their little lights shine while singing the final song and offering prayers for the world.

Christingles are used as a symbol by many Christian groups during the seasons of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany. The idea for them seems to go back to the 1740's when Bishop Johannes de Watteville of the Moravian Church in Germany wanted a way for encouraging people to reflect on Jesus. Essentially, they try to symbolise the coming of Jesus as the Light of the World. The word "Christingle" probably derives from a German dialect word meaning "Christ Child" or "Christmas gift".

As members of the Moravian Church moved away from their original roots, they helped to spread the tradition, particular within protestant churches. In the 1960's it was popularized in the UK when it was used to help raise funds for the Children's Society.

Originally, a Christingle was simply a ribbon wrapped around a candle. However it has evolved over the years. Today, a Christingle usually consists of the following elements: firstly, there is an orange and this represents the world, Around the orange is placed a red ribbon and this symbolises the blood Jesus shed during Holy Week and hence God's love embracing the world.

Four short sticks are inserted around the orange and these stand for either the "four corners of the world" or the four seasons. Small sweets or fruits are placed on the sticks. These represent God's creation and, more specifically, the fruits of harvest.

All processing with their lit candles

Preparing the christingles



Finally, a candle (partly wrapped in foil) is inserted in the top of the orange. When lit, this reminds us of Christ, the Light of the World: "The light shines on in the dark, and the darkness has never mastered it".

Malayalam Carol Service



The Hermon Mar Thoma Church (which normally meets in a hall in Hobs Moat) held their Carol Service in our church. They sang carols in English and the Malayalam language.

New Years Day Walk

With all the rainfall over recent weeks, including storm weather warnings, you would think that cancellations might be on the cards. Miraculously the skies cleared long enough to enjoy both the Turkey Trot (on Thursday 21 December) and New Year's Day walk without getting wet. Puddles and muddy patches were to be expected, but as my predecessor Reg Bywell used to say "a walk is not a walk without a little mud."

Around 40 of our Church members and families assembled in the sunshine at a car park in Knowle. It was a delight that a good number of our Hong Kong friends were able to join us this year. We enjoyed a 2 hour "stroll round Knowle" partly in the surrounding countryside and finishing up through suburbs and parkland of Knowle. It was lovely to round off the morning returning to our Solihull Church for fellowship, hot soup and mince pies. We are extremely grateful to the refreshment team for organising this for us.

Martin Cooke



Approaching the canal bridge in Knowle



Back in the hall for soup and mince pies

'Blessed are the poor in heart'

As part of its commitment to the local community, the Church now has and maintains a defibrillator. It is kept in the yellow cabinet mounted on the outside wall of the Community Centre. Should a person's heart stop beating, a defibrillator can be used by someone else to administer an electric shock to try to restart it.

Our defibrillator is registered with the National Defibrillator Network. This means that, in an emergency, anyone can dial 999 to request an ambulance, and they can be given the location of the nearest defibrillator and the code to open the cabinet in which it is kept. No training in its use is required as the machine itself provides instructions. Additionally, the machine checks for any cardiac activity and, if something is detected, then no shock is administered.

There is a lot of information on-line about defibrillators and their use, including the following link provided by the St John Ambulance:

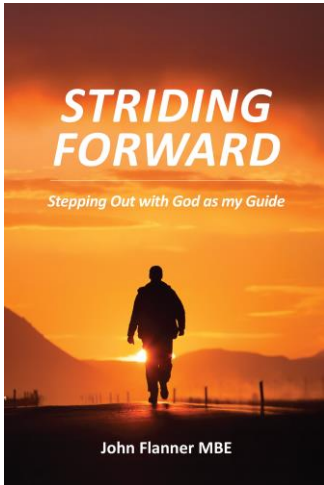
<https://www.sja.org.uk/get-advice/first-aid-advice/how-to/how-to-use-a-defibrillator/>

If you have any questions about the defibrillator, please ask me or one of the other stewards. I hope it never has to be used, but it is there should a medical emergency arise.



Glen Mullineux

Book Launch “Striding Forward”



On 29th November Solihull Methodist Church hosted a wonderful Book Launch for local man, John Flanner. The evening provided music and ‘tasters’ from his latest book. *Striding Forward* is John’s fifth book and chronicles the amazing things which have happened to him in the last five years despite the loss of his beloved wife Sylvia. He describes how he had found the faith and energy to draw close to God as his comfort and guide and to pursue all that God has for him.

John’s story is all the more remarkable considering that he became blind at age 19. He takes every opportunity to say that his Christian faith, which he discovered one year later, has been his motivation and purpose ever since.

The Book Launch included some of the songs which were special to John and Sylvia; a plug for the radio show *Flanner & Allan* which John co-hosts; a rundown of the numerous books a friend has read to him; and a truly inspirational testimony from John’s daughter Sara telling of her deliverance from a 20-year alcohol dependency.

Remarkably, Malcolm Beamond (who spoke at the event) was so grateful to step foot into the foyer of the church to see names of his ancestors, who were instrumental in founding Solihull Methodist Church! Their legacy truly lives on.

If you were unable to attend the evening you can still order any of John’s books.

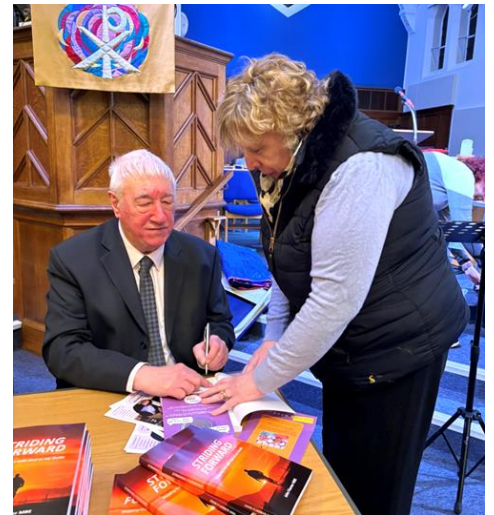
For a summary of all John Flanner’s books see:

<https://www.johnflanner.co.uk/publications/>

To order: email: john@flanner.co.uk John can also be booked as a Motivational Speaker.

John is particularly grateful for the support of Diane Webb and the team from Solihull Methodist who hosted the evening so very well.

John Flanner signing copies of his book



Mary’s Meals Concert

There are an estimated 67 million primary age children in developing countries having to work because their parents are too poor to pay for them to attend school. There are millions more who go to school who are too hungry to concentrate on their schooling.

The UK charity, Mary’s Meals, saw a need. Starting in Malawi in 2002 and using local volunteers they began raising money so that schools could provide wholesome breakfasts to some of these children. Today their work has grown to fund 2.4 million breakfasts **every day** to children in 18 different countries across the World, allowing those children an education that can start them on the ladder to lift them out of poverty.

Just before Christmas, the Lichfield Gospel Choir put on a fund-raising concert for Mary’s Meals at St. Martin’s in the Bull Ring, singing African, gospel and soul music. Our church has already supported Mary’s Meals. Soupa Talks helped raise £470 in 2022 and the donations received at the



Christmas Fellowship Tea organised by the Fitter Housegroup were generous enough to send a further £50. Members of the Fitter House Group decided to also support the Gospel Choir event. It was a great evening with very vibrant music.

Richard Balmer

Soupa Talks



*Light lunch, chat and an interesting talk,
1.00 pm in the Church Community Centre*

Wednesday 14th February

The History of St Alphege
Martin Ayers

Wednesday 28th February

Lundy Island – island without equal
Adrian James

Wednesday 13th March

The work of UKMED
Doctors on the frontline

Wednesday 27th March

Growing up in Zimbabwe
Rev Molly Chitokwindo

Wednesday 10th April

Tales from the chef
Ivan Crowdell



Tickets now available for our
Church's Musical Theatre Group's
next production

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

THE MIKADO

*What could possibly
go wrong?*



Mishaps abound with actors, properties, scenery and the
musicians which result in a hilarious performance for
your great delight.

**Please choose your seats online:
ticketsource.co.uk/smash**

Friday-Sunday 12-14th April 2024

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

Dovehouse Theatre, Langley School

Soupa Talks

**10th Anniversary Cream tea
with
Who let the Ukes out?**



To celebrate that Soupa Talks has been running
for 10 seasons 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

Our Community Hall

Recently one of our neighbours received an OBE and we celebrated with her. She had campaigned for grandchildren to have contact with their grandparents where the actual parents refused access. Currently neither grandchildren or grandparents have any legal right to see each other or gain from each other's company. She has campaigned for years, forming a large group across the country and beyond and obtained the support of a leading politician (David Blunkett).

As we listened to her the story of her campaign (still ongoing) we discovered that her first campaign meeting and many of those later took place in our church hall. Perhaps we think that hiring our premises just helps cover the cost of maintaining them but it is more than that. It is another part of our outreach. We try at all times to provide a trusted, friendly, good quality service at a fair price which enables many very good things to happen. We should be quietly proud of that.

Richard Balmer

Local gangs take over Methodist Churches in Haiti

Mission Coordinator for the Methodist Haiti District, David Draeger*, gives an update on the situation in Haiti and how it affects daily life.

"It is hard to believe that another year has come and gone. Most days are like the one that precedes and the one that follows. The unending grief from continuous gang warfare, with murder, rape, extortion, and robbery tends to lull us into complacent oblivion. It is sad to say that I do not get as much accomplished as I would wish because hope for the future dwindles. It seems easier to just go with the flow and do nothing rather than to try and change the unchangeable.

When I stop for a moment and look around, I see evidence that the Church, specifically Eglise Méthodiste d' Haiti [The Methodist Church in Haiti] is moving forward, but there are some church buildings, like St. Martin and Croix d' Boquets, that have been taken over by the local gangs so that the people are unable to worship in their own sanctuary. Other congregations are unable to travel through gang-infested areas to their normal places of worship. At the same time, I see congregations like Frères and Jérémie that are relatively safe, and their worship services are full every Sunday.

Throughout the whole country there is the same pattern; some churches are hampered by the gangs and others remain as a light in a darkened world.

But then I am awakened by the Hope proclaimed by Jesus Christ and my faith in the future is renewed. Throughout the year there are births and deaths, weddings and funerals, there are still confirmation classes and Bible studies where people are coming to Christ and as a result are professing their membership in the Methodist Church of Haiti."

PRAY

For peace in Haiti

For an end to gang violence

For healing for victims

For compassionate, just and democratic governance

For international support for Haiti to create Haitian solutions to Haitian issues

* The Methodist Church in Haiti is a District of the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas, one of 107 global partners of the Methodist Church in Britain.



Can you help?

For the church to run efficiently we urgently need help in the following areas. If you want to know more, please ask a steward (wearing a yellow lanyard).

- ❖ **Catering** - helping to prepare and serve refreshments that make church events so successful
- ❖ **Property** – helping to keep our facilities supporting our growing church
- ❖ **Stewards** – supporting the life and mission of the church as it grows
- ❖ **Tech** – enabling church activities to be fresh and innovative using modern technology



World Day of Prayer

Friday 1st March

The United Reformed Church
(741 Warwick Road, Solihull) will be open from
10 am - 2.30 pm for private prayer

12 noon Community guided prayer
20 minutes of prayers led from the front

The World Day of Prayer material this year is provided by the women of Palestine on the theme of "I beg you, bear with one another with love" from Ephesians ch 4 v1-7. This will influence the focus of the prayer stations and some of the ideas for presentation, interaction and intercession.

Green Matters Caring for God's Creation

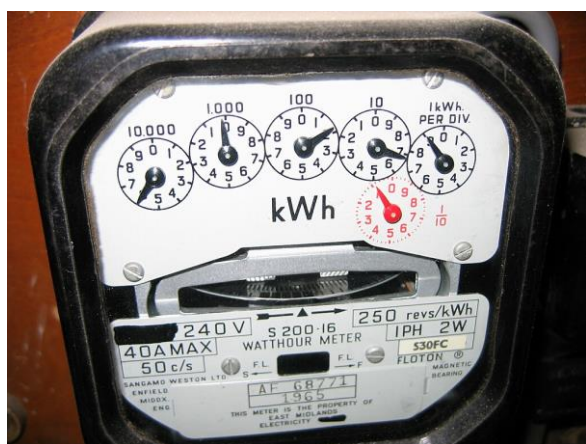
Lent Challenge

Lent begins on Wednesday 14th February and very often people give things up for Lent. Here is a suggestion. When you read this article please go to straight to your electricity meter (or meters) and write down the reading. Then, if you have recent bills with true, not estimated, readings, work out your weekly electricity use. If you can't find a bill, put a note in your diary to read the meter(s) again in 3 weeks time and work out your normal weekly use from that.

Either on 14th February or the end of the 3 weeks, try your hardest to save electricity. (It is heating, whether it be for warmth, cooking, or washing yourself, clothes or dishes, that really consumes electricity.) There are lots of ways. It could mean:

- A shorter shower or even missing a customary shower
- Wearing clothes an extra day and/or preferring clothes that don't need ironing
- Definitely turning thermostats down a degree or two
- Using the microwave or air fryer (see below) rather than the oven or steamer if food will cook almost as well.
- Switching computers off, not leaving them on standby
- Removing mobiles and other electronic devices if they are already 100% charged.
- Switching off all un-needed lights of course. They may not use much power but several left on for hours will make a difference.

At the end of the 3 weeks read the meter(s) again and work out the energy saved.



CC BY-NC

Send me your meter readings and calculations. **At the end of Lent I will give boxes of chocolates (yes, chocolates) to the 2 best performing households!**

This challenge is intended to emphasize a serious point. A little before Christmas the nations of the world met at the UN organised COP28 conference in Dubai. When the wrangling had finished, they agreed to 'transition away from the use of fossil fuels'. The speed or means of doing so were absent but the critical point is that even if governments around the world genuinely want to reduce fossil fuel use **it is still us who have to change our habits and make the savings.** And we can do more: by setting examples, bringing the issue of climate change up in conversations, mentioning, quietly,

what we have achieved. And, of course, it doesn't stop there. If you found you could manage with, say, 15% less electricity in Lent, why not keep on doing so?



Hot Air Fryers

I suppose it was over a year ago that many started talking about air fryers. They were suitable for many foods (though chips registered prominently) and claimed to cook more efficiently than ovens though not so efficiently as microwaves. The technology is really very simple. Air is a bad conductor of heat so the fan option in many ovens works by just blowing the air in a normal oven around so that the hottest air gets near the food quicker. Food can then be cooked just as well at lower temperatures. Air fryers take this notion as far as it will go. The fan drives the heat toward the food in a confined space. The food cooks quicker and uses less electricity.

Thank you from Tools with a Mission



Thank you for all the tools donated to TWAM. Here they are loaded in the back of the TWAM van.

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.



**15th - 17th
March
2024**

AMPLIFY

**Activities,
Worship,
Fun**

A weekend away at the Pioneer Centre, an outdoor education near Cleobury Mortimer, for young people aged 8 – 18 and their leaders, open to all in the Birmingham and Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury Districts.

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 Chitokwinda
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 Chitokwinda, Riva Chung, 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 March Messenger items is
Sunday 11th February**

February Diary

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|---|---|---|--|--|---|
| | | | | 1 6.00 Beavers 6.30 Cubs 8.15 Badminton | 2 6.30 EN RG | 3 |
| 4 10.30 Morning service | 5 9.45 Pushchair Club 10.00 Shall we talk? 7.30 Scouts 7.30 Church Council | 6 9.30 Communion 10.15 Contact Choir 10.30 Men's Coffee 10.30 Bible Study 5.00 Rainbows 6.00 Brownies | 7 9.30 Morning prayers by Zoom 10.30 Classic Cantonese Fellowship | 8 6.00 Beavers 6.30 Cubs 8.15 Badminton | 9 10.30 Friendship Café 6.30 EN RG | 10 |
| 11 10.30 Morning service with communion | 12 | 13 Shrove Tuesday 9.30 Communion 10.15 Contact Choir 10.30 Bible Study 10.30 Men's coffee | 14 Ash Wednesday 9.30 Morning prayers by Zoom 10.30 Classic Cantonese Fellowship 1.00 Soupa Talks | 15 9.00 Ramble 8.15 Badminton | 16 | 17 8.30 Lent Breakfast |
| 18 10.30 Morning service | 19 9.45 Pushchair Club 10.00 Shall we talk? 7.30 Scouts | 20 9.30 Communion 10.15 Contact Choir 10.30 Men's Coffee 10.30 Bible Study 5.00 Rainbows 6.00 Brownies | 21 9.30 Morning prayers by Zoom 10.30 Classic Cantonese Fellowship | 22 6.00 Beavers 6.30 Cubs 8.15 Badminton | 23 10.30 Friendship Café 6.30 EN RG | 24 8.30 Lent Breakfast |
| 25 10.30 Morning service 6.30 Healing service with communion | 26 9.45 Pushchair Club 10.00 Shall we talk? 7.30 Scouts | 27 9.30 Communion 10.15 Contact Choir 10.30 Men's Coffee 10.30 Bible Study 5.00 Rainbows 6.00 Brownies | 28 9.30 Morning prayers by Zoom 10.30 Classic Cantonese Fellowship 1.00 Soupa Talks | 29 6.00 Beavers 6.30 Cubs 8.15 Badminton | 1 March World Day of Prayer 6.30 EN RG | 2 8.30 Lent Breakfast 6.00 Beetle Drive in aid of the Church Project |

Pastoral Support Worker

教牧支援工作者

*Part-time 2 year fixed term role
for fluent Cantonese and English speaker*

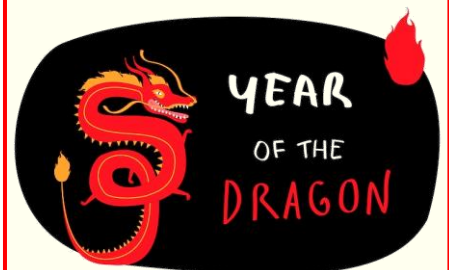
Solihull Methodist Church has a large and growing membership covering a wide range of ages and backgrounds, and seeks a person to support this community both pastorally and spiritually. It is an occupational requirement for the person to be a practicing, professing and prayerful Christian (Equality Act 2010)

*Salary range: £11,348 to £12,022 per annum for 16 hours per week
(£13.64 to £14.45 per hour)*

For further details and application form please contact:
Solihull Methodist Church Office, Blossomfield Road, Solihull, B91 1LG
email: office@solihull-methodist.org.uk

Closing date: Friday 2nd February 2024, 5pm

Lunar New Year



The Hong Kongers will be celebrating the start of the Year of the Dragon on **Saturday 10th February**. They will decorate the church for the Sunday (11th February) morning service and will serve coffee in the hall afterwards with traditional snacks and sweets.



There were many questions for Richard Balmer when he went to a meeting of EN.RG at the beginning of December. Richard talked about his trip round the world over 60 years ago, which took him 18 months. He went on a cargo boat to America, hitch hiked across America, flew to New Zealand, another boat to India and then drove a mini van back to England. Quite an adventure. He showed many slides but there were also activities highlighting the different countries he visited.

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.

Pushchair Club

There is always lots going on at Pushchair Club for little ones and their carers. It meets every Monday morning in termtime from 9.45 am. There are many activities and toys to play with and a break for refreshments about 10.30 am, followed by more activities with singing and stories.

It is an opportunity for carers (mums, dads and grandparents) to chat and children to play with other children and the many toys and activities.



**Blossomfield Road
Solihull, B91 1LG
0121 705 7367**