

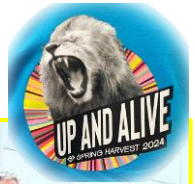


# Messenger

## Solihull Methodist Church

May 2024

## Spring Harvest – Up and Alive



A party from SMC attended Spring Harvest from April 1<sup>st</sup> to April 5<sup>th</sup> along with friends from other churches. Butlin's Skegness holiday camp was the destination this year because the event at Minehead fell outside Solihull schools' holidays. Abi Godfrey had again taken on the task of organising our visit and what a great job she does. The theme this year was 'Up and Alive', following the Ephesians journey. 'I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received' (Eph4:1).

As ever, there were different areas for worship including 'The Big Start' each morning which was thoroughly enjoyed by our young people and our older but 'young at heart' people. In the evening, again different worship areas were available to serve the needs of the 5,000 or so pilgrims attending. And, yes, all were well fed, in all senses.

Amongst the many workshops and speakers were sessions on friendship, parenting, justice as well as presentations by this year's partner charities. The presenters were outstanding. The choice was quite staggering with something for everyone. Younger members were well catered for in different age-appropriate groups studying the theme.

A vast array of other activities was offered during the day and evening, with plenty of opportunity to



enjoy the Butlin's facilities. The entertainment programme was equally wide-ranging. Comedians Tim Vine and John Archer celebrated performing together at Spring Harvest for 30 years and were very funny. An Open Mic event on the first night saw our own Ben dazzle the audience with his magic tricks. There were plenty of sports tournaments including football, netball and ten pin bowling. Two of our party, Charlotte and Ben, reached the final of their respective tournaments.

What a joy it is to share this time of worship, learning and leisure together. Booking for the 2025 event will take place in June.

Alan Faulkner



### In this issue

**Church Family News**

**District Chair's letter**

**Easter 2024**

**Baptism and confirmation**

**Church Project News**

**Ramblers**

**Housegroups**

**Mikado**

**Circuit News**

**Christian Aid Coffee Morning**

**Green Matters**

**Pre loved – Community project in Yorkshire**

**Shall We Talk Farm Visit**

# Church Family News

## 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday



David Lingard celebrated his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday on 20<sup>th</sup> March. We hope he had a happy day

## Thank you

Following Helen's recent illness and the passing of her mother, the Banks family would like to thank everyone for their kind words, cards, flowers and prayers. Helen is resting and on her way to a full recovery.

We now learn that Jon's mother, Carole Banks has recently died. Her funeral will be held on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May at Charnock Richard, near Wigan.

Carole will be remembered at Solihull Methodist Church from her interesting talks to Soupa Talks.

## Deaths



**Brenda Downing** died on 8<sup>th</sup> April.

**Des Nicholle** also died on 8<sup>th</sup> April.

The funeral arrangements for Brenda and Des are not known at the time of printing.



**Peter Handley** died on 9<sup>th</sup> April.

His funeral will be on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> May with a short service at Robin Hood at 11.00am. This will be followed at 12 noon with a Thanksgiving Service for Peter's life in the church.. There will be refreshments afterwards in the Hall.

## Prayer Box



We pray for:

- the family of Eric Fawthrop, after his sudden death
- the family of Des Nicolle, on their father's death
- Helen and Jon Banks, Rachel and Daniel, on the death of Helen's mother and Jon's mother
- Edna Handley, Susan and Dave, on the death of Peter
- Brian Downing and the family, on the death of Brenda
- Jane Garnett, who has broken her humerus
- Andrea Hunt, recovering from major back surgery
- Rachel Puopolo, who is recovering following a stay in hospital
- Bryan Fitter, who has a slipped disc

## Urgent Appeal from the Church Stewards

Over the last few months we have invited a number of our church family to consider serving the church as a steward. We have also put an appeal in the notices and appealed on Sunday mornings. Unfortunately, we are very sorry to say whilst two new members to our church have agreed to become stewards, no one with more than 8 months' experience of the Methodist Church has come forward to offer to be a part of the stewards' team.

Sadly, unless we have some volunteers the stewards will not be able to fully discharge their responsibilities and meet expectations in the future. We are a growing church, and with growth comes the need for more hands to shoulder the responsibility of stewardship. This is an important role and vital to the smooth running of our Church.

Being a church steward is a very rewarding experience. Stewards work as part of a close team where everyone helps one another. Do not be concerned that you do not know enough about stewarding as you will be given lots of support. You do not have to be retired to be a steward, two of our current stewards are in paid employment.

Therefore, we ask you to prayerfully consider whether you could serve as a church steward. The role is normally for three years. We are also happy to discuss how the role can work as a job share and/or with a reduced term of service if that can help enable the team to operate in the short to medium term.

If you would like to know about the role, please speak to one of the stewards as soon as possible.

# District Chair's Letter

Dear friends

I return from three restorative months on sabbatical, and have greatly appreciated this wonderful gift of the Methodist Church to presbyters and deacons. A precious time for study, reflection, renewal and rest, that included joining a choir and walking the last portion of the Camino to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela (The Way of St. James).



It is especially poignant to be returning to work in our Easter Resurrection season, recalling how the amazing message of life out of death and despair reached the apostles through the women disciples. Jesus is not dead – He is Alive! We thought that all was lost. Two days ago all hope was gone; the vision of a new world of peace, goodness and kindness had been extinguished – this is what we thought. But a new reality has arisen – Christ is Alive and God's message of love and life is now available for the whole world.

A major part of my sabbatical has been spent observing the devastation of the Israel-Gaza war – and along with millions of people across the globe, I have been heartbroken, dismayed and appalled at the level of destruction and loss of life that has been exacted upon the people of Gaza. It has been a time of learning more of the history that has brought the world to the point where 1139 Israeli and foreign nationals were killed on 7<sup>th</sup> October. Over 40,000 Palestinians have been killed, the majority of whom are women and children and over 200 aid workers, more than 300 doctors and nurses, more than 120 journalists. We are yet to know how many of the hostages taken by Hamas have been killed as almost 2 million Gazans are being deliberately starved to death. Almost 500 Palestinians have been killed on the West Bank since 7<sup>th</sup> October and thousands have been taken into custody, many without charge. The silence of our state media propelled many people to research the situation for themselves, and discovered Jewish historians, legal professionals, academics, theologians and others who were able to provide information and context previously not widely known.

Suddenly, we find ourselves reviewing the past century of wars and conflicts. Where was the church in the 20<sup>th</sup> century when previous war crimes were taking place. We all want to believe that we would have spoken up; we would never have allowed such atrocities to take place – if we were there. Spring forward in time and we are here,

with more technology and information available to us than any other generation to see with our own eyes in real time what is happening, and what does our faith in Jesus Christ call us to be and to do?

I am glad to say that Methodists across the country have been marching alongside our Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu and non-faith brothers and sisters, week after week, calling for a ceasefire, the liberation of the people of Palestine, and the release of the Israeli hostages. Methodists across the connexion have been writing to their MPs to vote for a ceasefire and for the cessation of arms sales to the Israeli government. Methodists in the UK and America have been meeting on-line for prayer each week, co-hosted by our Methodist Liaison Officer for Jerusalem, Rev David Hardman. One of the highlights for me was a local Palestine gathering where families, mums, dads and children gathered to share poetry, sing songs and learn some traditional Palestinian circle dance – in the open air of Mosely Village, accompanied by car horns of drivers also wanting a ceasefire.

There will be some who hold opposing views; some may ask, "Why are you so fired-up over this conflict above all the other conflicts going on around the world right now - Sudan, Haiti, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ukraine?" These are all horrific and must be resolved. Perhaps it's the length of time – 107 years that the Palestinian people have been suffering; perhaps its because this is the region where Jesus walked; perhaps it's simply our common humanity. Certainly, there's a longing for both the Palestinian and Jewish people to be genuinely enabled to live in peace and harmony, in the land we call Holy.

One of the questions that have been raised for me through this conflict is, "What is the purpose of my faith in Jesus Christ – is it a 'fairy-tale' or is it real and concrete? Who is the God that we are in relationship with? What kind of people do we want to be in the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ?" Today in our Synod, we will be in discussions in our workshops on being the church in small faith communities; what it means to be an intergenerational, and justice-seeking, church, and the implications of striving for eco-justice in our church policies and practice.

Each of us, with the support of our church community, have work to do in making our profession of Jesus Christ real, and something that brings hope and healing to our world. The Spirit of God will motivate and compel each of us to action on a variety of issues – action on poverty; youth engagement; evangelism and church growth; worship, prayer and a Methodist Way of Life. We must discern, through prayer, how the Spirit is generating compassion, care, kindness and a longing for justice within us and for the world, and then respond to God's Spirit in faithful trust and obedience.

In all things, we seek God's help, strength and wisdom to do this work with integrity and courage.

Rev. Novette S. Headley –  
Chair – Birmingham District

# Easter 2024

## Maundy Thursday

## Good Friday



At the Maundy Thursday service Rev Dr Nadim Nasser described how the Last Supper would have been carried out according to customs in the Middle East. He also explained the significance of washing of someone else's feet in the Middle East.



The Walk of Witness through the town centre on Good Friday turned into a 'walk of wetness'. It was raining so hard while in Mell Square that Father Dominic's notes got so wet they stuck together and the hymn was abandoned. All walked back to St Alphege for the final prayers led by Rev Molly, again in the rain. Of course, then as we went into the Oliver Bird Hall for a hot drink and hot cross buns the sun came out!

## Easter Sunday

Flowers were added to the cross outside the church on Easter Morning as people arrived for church. The decorated cross was brought into the church during the singing of the first hymn. During the service Daniel Banks played his trumpet to add to Easter music and the Cantonese choir sang "Because He 'lives" in Cantonese.

It was a busy service with a baptism and confirmation of new church members as well as communion.



# Baptism



# Confirmation of new church members



Rebecca Lo was baptised. She was also confirmed along with Kin Keung Hung.

## Young Church Praise Party

On 7<sup>th</sup> April Young Church looked at the Eternal Wall of Answered Prayer. They had written their own prayers which were used as prayers of intercession during the morning service.

They brought forward their prayers on bricks and built their own Eternal Wall of Prayer on the Table. This was very effective with our young folk displaying a solemnity beyond their years and adding so much to our intercessions.



## Fund-raising Concert



### Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> June, 7.30 pm

There will be a special fund-raising concert at Solihull Methodist Church to raise funds to buy musical instruments and equipment for the Music Department at Tudor Grange School.

The performance will be given by the Robson Duo. The brothers have given many performances throughout the UK, Europe and beyond and played in our church, April 2 years ago. Two pupils from TG will make guest appearances to demonstrate the high-quality musicianship of their pupils.

**Tickets available on the door for a suggested donation of £10.00**

The programme will include:

- N. Rimsky-Korsakov: Sheherazade Op.35 Mvt 1
- S. Rachmaninov: Six Morceaux Op. 11, No.2,3,5 *pupil solo*
- A. Borodin: String Quartet No 2 (2nd mvt)
- F. Liszt: Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2,
- M. Ravel: Ma Mère l'Oye (Mother Goose Suite) *pupil solo*
- G. Gershwin: Rhapsody in Blue

# Church Project

## Matthew Rusike Children's Home (MRCH)

### The Big Bake

There were fewer than hoped for at the Big Bake on the afternoon of Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> April. However, those that did attend enjoyed a good cup of tea and cake and plenty of chat.

Caleb produced some puff pastry with cranberry and orange biscuits along with an orange dip, which was very innovative

Other interesting cakes were a chocolate and beetroot cake and a very beautifully decorated lemon cake.

Stan Field became the Big Bake Champion with his excellent fruit cake.

Thank you to Joyce Fitter and Margaret Hughes for judging the entries.

Cakes were sold off at the end and some were sold after church on Sunday morning so, a grand total of £270 was raised for the church project.



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.

SOLIHULL METHODIST CHURCH

# BARN DANCE

Saturday 18th May, 7pm



£10 to include a hot dog supper  
Family ticket £30

SUPPORTING THE  
MATTHEW RUSIKE CHILDREN'S HOME (MRCH)



### Future Fund Raising Events

Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup> May	Allen's marathon run
Saturday 18 <sup>th</sup> May	Barn Dance
Saturday 1 <sup>st</sup> June	Allen's Snowdon climb
Saturday 6 <sup>th</sup> July	Concert
Sunday 11 <sup>th</sup> August	BBQ service

*Note date change*

# Record number of Ramblers in April



After a frosty night we woke up on Thursday morning to full sunshine which remained with us for the whole of our rambling day. We had 14 of our regular walkers and were delighted to welcome 5 Hongkongers, Carolina, Carol, Ahling, Danny and Tonya joining us for the first time.

From the Church car park we travelled by train to Acocks Green and imagine our surprise when a further 9 or so Hongkongers were waiting for us at Acocks Green station. We very much enjoyed their company as we made our way to the nearby Grand Union Canal. Despite passing through residential and industrial areas, it was lined with trees and open spaces, and seemed more like a stroll through the

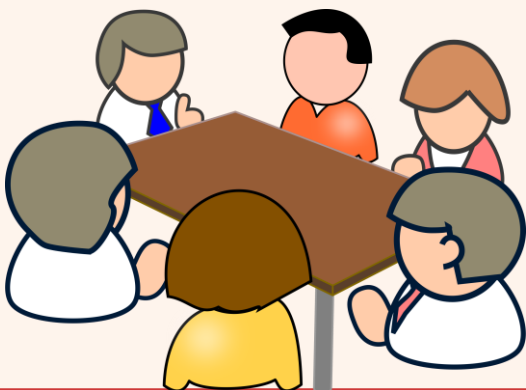
countryside. We spotted a heron, moorhen, ducks and Canada geese, plenty of bluebells and other flora on our way towards Birmingham.

Soon one could make out the Rotunda and other landmarks in the distance, but the canal then veered to the eastern side of the city where there is much interesting new redevelopment in progress. We took a left-hand fork towards the city centre and arrived at our pre-booked luncheon destination, The Old Contemptibles Inn, 100 yards from Snow Hill station where we said goodbye to our Hong Kong friends heading for the Chinese Quarter.

Martin Cooke

## Housegroups

There are a number of groups that meet during the week for fellowship and discussion. The topics of the discussions vary. One group is currently looking at different faiths throughout the world, another discusses topical subjects, another bible study etc. The Fowgay Group is very supportive of the Sweet Project – a community project in Birmingham. Some of the groups meet in homes and others on church premises.



The groups meet:

**Banks Housegroup** – 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday evenings of the month

**Bible Study** – every Tuesday morning

**Fitter Housegroup** - 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday evenings of the month

**Fowgay group** – 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday evenings of the month

**Innes housegroup** – 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday afternoons at 2.30 in the Margaret Wharam Room at church

**Life Group** is currently reorganising their meetings

**Woodlea Wanderers** – 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday evenings of the month



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

# THE MIKADO

WHAT COULD POSSIBLY GO WRONG?

A show quite unlike any our Church's musical theatre group SMASH has performed before! Mishaps galore with the actors, scenery, properties and the musicians entertained our audiences with a surprising interpretation of *The Mikado*. Things should be back to normal next year for *Peter Pan*.



Three little maids from school



A wand'ring minstrel



Hermione—85 and not out!



The producer is rather tied up



The flowers that bloom in the Spring—with roses and wine



The band have a tea break—in the middle of the show



I've got a little list





We are gentlemen of Japan



The origami competition for the audience



Comes a train of little ladies



Tit willow, Tit willow, Tit willow



The Mikado



Lord High Executioner and Pooh-Bah



Katisha



Spot the M I K A D O?



Off to France, Russia, Scotland and Brazil (in *The Mikado* ??)



What are fairies doing in *The Mikado*?



The happy ending

# Circuit News

The Circuit Assembly met on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> March. Here are some of the issues raised.

## Proposed Merger of Districts

Plans are well under way to merge the Birmingham District with the Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton District for greater efficiency. The proposed start date is September 2025.

## Stationing and Appointments in the Birmingham Circuit Leaving in August:

**Rev Nick Jones** ( former Superintendent Minister) is now moving totally to become Superintendent Minister at Sutton Park Circuit.

**Rev Alison Richards** ( former Superintendent Minister) is “sitting down”( retiring) after a long period of ill health. She is the Minister at Lozells and Perry Barr.

**Rev Sue Shortman** and **Rev Deborah Humphries** will take up new appointments in other Circuits in September. Deborah sent her best wishes to all her friends in Solihull.

## Arriving in August:

**Rev Quophie Anochie Ababio** to Great Barr, Perry Hall, Perry Barr and Lozells

**Deacon Angie Allport** to serve in Perry Barr and Lozells  
**Probationer, Rev Julie Clark** to Acocks Green and Cambridge Road

**Farewell Service: 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2024 6pm at Carrs Lane**

**Welcome Service: 8<sup>th</sup> September 2024 6pm at Solihull Methodist Church**

## Communication and IT

**Reuben Williams** is the new Circuit Communications Officer. It would be good for more people to receive the Circuit weekly newsletter online. It is available for all and will keep you in touch with wider Circuit news. There is a link to sign up for this on our own church website and the weekly notices.

## Circuit Stewards - Urgent Action needed

With Gill Wilkins, Sharon Clutterbuck, Janice Martin and Marjorie Roper completing their terms of service there are now **7 vacancies**.

**One** person has volunteered and will start soon. Marjorie has offered to continue with a reduced time commitment.

## A New Approach

There is a desperate need for more people to step up to and offer time to Circuit issues and the suggestion is to try a different way. **The Birmingham Circuit would like to build a team of people** who would have particular interests and involvement especially in

- Human Resources (appointing and looking after lay employees)
- Stationing (reviewing ministers' appointments and putting in place new Presbyters and Deacons as vacancies come round)
- Strategic Development – planning for the future
- District Links

**Challenge:** *Can you offer any time or expertise in any of the above areas?*

## Mission Action Plan

There is a need for improved Communication and Networking within the Circuit.

## New Places for New People

This is a project being promoted by Rev Karen Webber in Stechford, where there is much loneliness, poor housing and food poverty. She is meeting and befriending people in the community and finding that there are many who are lonely or seeking community spaces where they feel at home, yet there are few suitable places to just get together. It is about empowering those outside the church to find ways to reach out to others in need in the community, to build on the resilience of individuals as they support each other. This could become a new inclusive church community where faith is explored in action, where the gospel that everyone is loved by God is declared and where the Holy Spirit is found in the relationships that form. It is being financed by Connexion, District and Circuit.

***The message to us all was to find small ways we can be active and make things happen in unexpected places.***

## Well-Being Initiative

**Rev Caz Hague** was concerned that more and more Ministers are becoming ill and losing time from their work because of the pressures of their jobs. This affects all in the life of the church: ordained staff, lay workers and volunteers who are all being expected to do more.. “People are tired of feeling tired.” It was suggested that:

- 1. Encourage all people to take rest days: ministers, lay staff, volunteers.**  
*What can we do to help YOU do this?*
- 2. Promote a culture where “NO” is an acceptable answer**  
*What makes it difficult for YOU to say “NO”?*
- 3. Create boundaries**  
*What boundaries would help YOU flourish?  
e.g. times of phone calls, email response times*

## Finances

**Andrew Morris** gave notice that he will be stepping down from the role of treasurer in 12 months' time.

In future the treasurer's role would be less demanding because a Circuit Finance Officer has been employed to take on more of the role. A new Treasurer will however still be required.

Finances are still dependent on the sale of properties. Maypole Church will be up for auction soon.

## Children and Youth ( Ermine Mitchell)

A large number of young people from the Circuit attended the AMPLIFY weekend in Cleobury Mortimer recently and it was deemed a great success by all who went. Since Ermine Mitchell will be taking on more in her role as Local Lay Pastor (a new form of local minister introduced officially by Conference over the last few years), the Circuit is looking to appoint someone to take on the role of Children and Youth Coordinator. This will be advertised internally to begin in September.

# christian aid coffee morning



Saturday 11th May: 10am-2pm

SOLIHULL METHODIST CHURCH HALL



WOW! This Christian Aid Coffee Morning has it all!

## Property Working Party

Saturday 18th May

meeting in the car park at 9.30 a.m.

All are welcome.

If planning to come please email  
[propertywkparty@solihull-methodist.org.uk](mailto:propertywkparty@solihull-methodist.org.uk)



Come and help spruce up the church buildings and grounds. There are many jobs to be done.

FREE EVENT, LUNCH PROVIDED

## CHURCH OF SANCTUARY CONFERENCE

8 JUNE 2024

10.00AM - 4.30PM

CARR'S LANE CHURCH CENTRE  
 BIRMINGHAM, B4 7SX

This free conference and networking event, organised by the Church of Sanctuary, Churches' Refugee Network and City of Sanctuary, will explore how churches are responding to the call to offer sanctuary to those seeking asylum.

### KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



**VANESSA BAKER,**  
 ST DUNSTAN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL  
**ARMIN ZAMANIAN,**  
 BIRMINGHAM CATHEDRAL

### SPEAKERS/CHAIRS

REVD DR INDERJIT BHOGAL | BISHOP MIKE ROYAL, GENERAL SECRETARY, CTE  
 DR NICOLA BRADY, GENERAL SECRETARY, CTBI | BISHOP ROSE HUDSON-WILKIN,  
 BISHOP OF DOVER

REGISTER YOUR ATTENDANCE

0121 643 6151



## Adavu

Small Steps | Transforming Lives

# ONLINE CHARITY AUCTION

## 7TH - 17TH MAY

WATCH OUT FOR POSTS STARTING THIS WEEK SHOWCASING THE ITEMS TO BE AUCTIONED:

- an original work of art
- Body Shop hamper
- vouchers for trips, food and experiences
- hand-crafted bags

ALL PROCEEDS WILL GO TO DIRECTLY SUPPORTING SURVIVORS OF MODERN SLAVERY

<https://app.galabid.com/adavuauction/items>

info@adavu.org.uk

# Green Matters Caring for God's Creation

## Cooking by Induction

Although many choose to cook with electricity which is slower but cleaner and less hazardous than gas, for years gas has been much cheaper. But times are changing. From next year, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, new houses will not have gas supplied at all and, no doubt, pressure to replace gas cookers with electric will mount.

The top of traditional electric cooker has so-called 'hot plates'. Electric wires in the plates heat the plates. Saucepans, for example, placed on the hotplate, become warm as heat is conducted through the metal to the contents inside. This takes time and, if the saucepan doesn't exactly match (or overlap) the hotplate, some heat is lost to the air.

Induction is a very clever way to move both electricity (transformers work by 'inducing' one set of coils to receive electricity at a lower voltage but higher current and electric cars can be recharged this way) and heat. Induction hobs normally have ceramic surfaces with sets of coils underneath. Switched on with a saucepan on top, a coil in the hob creates an electromagnetic field between the hob and saucepan heating the contents. The rest of the hob remains cold and, therefore, safe, and the food is cooked quicker and more efficiently. The hob itself is also easier to clean.

There are 2 downsides. Induction hobs are a bit more expensive and, although there are ways to get round this, aluminium and non-iron based saucepans cannot be used. Nevertheless, they are the way forward.



## Waiting for Bugs

Has anyone seen the first bug hotel now in the Church grounds. We could do with 2 or 3 more, of any size. Also, does anyone have or could they make, a bird box for smaller birds? If so, let one of the group (see below) know.



## Church Grounds

This colourful display of tulips is in the church grounds. We are very grateful to Peter Stoakley and his team for all their hard work keeping the grounds looking so good.



## Christian Aid coffee morning

There will be a Greener Church Stand at the Christian Aid morning on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> May. Do call.

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.

# Pre-Loved, a shop about building a community in West Yorkshire

**Keighley is the second most deprived area in the district of Bradford, outside of the city centre.**

**The shop Pre-Loved meets a need, helping families who are working, but struggling to make ends meet. It is one of the New Places for New People projects of the Yorkshire West Methodist District**

In the Royal Arcade in Keighley, the Pre-Loved shop offers second-hand clothing for babies and children and an area for children to play. "This morning a new client came, she had a little one as well as a baby and was struggling. She was able to sit here and feed her baby, and I kept the little one occupied. We offer second-hand clothing and a space to chat; sometimes we give the items away for free if that's what's needed," explains Sarah, the shop manager and Gathering Pioneer of the Airedale Methodist Circuit

The project began in a dream experienced by Revd Nel Shallow, one of the Pioneer Presbyters, before she moved to the area in 2021, "One day, I was walking in the town, chatting with people and I came into the Royal Arcade and there was the shop that I had dreamt about, available to be rented. It was unbelievable.

The plans moved on quickly as the circuit wondered how to start a New Places for New People project.

Revd Clare Sainsby, Superintendent Minister in the Yorkshire West Methodist District, called a circuit leadership team meeting and it was agreed they would rent it but they were unsure how they were to use it at the time.

Soon they decided to open a shop to sell pre-loved children's clothing.

*"We are a community shop. We are here to bless and love the community, not make money. The name also has a theological meaning as, within our Wesleyan tradition, we have prevenient grace that we are already pre-loved by God."*

Revd Nel Shallow, a Pioneer Presbyter

A unit nearby was also empty and they decided to rent it and expand their offer to include toys, books and a space to chat and offer activities for children.

"The reaction has been fantastic. Because we are within the community of the arcade, there's a kind of chaplaincy that happens. We have had really good conversations with clients and with the other retailers. A few people asked us to pray for them and often people come in and ask why we're here," says shop manager Sarah.

Passionate about the Methodist Way of Life, many members offered to volunteer at the shop while others wash and iron the donated clothes. "We have a lovely group of people who make fabric bags for us. We don't use any plastic bags, but we bless people with these amazing fabric bags when they buy anything," explains Nel.



# Soupa Talks

## 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Cream Tea

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

**Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May, 3.00 pm**

There will be entertainment by

**Who let the Ukes out?**



**Tickets £10 from Sue Balmer and Joyce Fitter**

**All proceeds will go to UKMED**  
providing medical care in emergency situations round the world

### 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

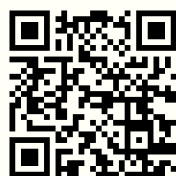


**Janice Smith**  
Church Administrator  
Tuesday - Friday



**Chris Giles**  
Pastoral Coordinator

**Church Office**  
0121 705 7367



[www.solihull-methodist.org.uk](http://www.solihull-methodist.org.uk)

## The Messenger Team

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Glen Mullineux, and Lawrie Rumens  
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right to edit articles if necessary.  
Please send photographs **separately** as jpeg files

**NB. Last date for June Messenger items is  
Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> May**

# May Diary

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			<b>1</b> 9.30 Morning prayers by Zoom	<b>2</b> 7.00 am – 10 pm The Hall is being used as a polling station	<b>3</b> 10.00 Classic Cantonese Fellowship in the hall 6.30 Youth Club	<b>4</b>
<b>5</b> 10.30 Morning service	<b>6</b> 9.45 Pushchair Club 10.00 Shall we talk? 7.30 Scouts	<b>7</b> 9.30 Communion 10.15 Contact Choir 10.30 Men's Coffee 10.30 Bible Study 5.00 Rainbows 6.00 Brownies	<b>8</b> 9.30 Morning prayers by Zoom 10.00 Classic Cantonese Fellowship in the church 3.00 Soupa Talks Anniversary cream tea	<b>9</b> 6.00 Beavers 6.30 Cubs 8.15 Badminton	<b>10</b> 10.30 Friendship Café 6.30 Youth Club	<b>11</b> 10.00 Christian Aid Coffee Morning
<b>12</b> 10.30 Morning service with communion 8.00 Prayer Space	<b>13</b> 9.45 Pushchair Club 10.00 Shall we talk? 7.30 Scouts	<b>14</b> 9.30 Communion 10.15 Contact Choir 10.30 Bible Study 10.30 Men's coffee 5.00 Rainbows 6.00 Brownies	<b>15</b> 9.30 Morning prayers by Zoom	<b>16</b> 9.30 Ramble 6.00 Beavers 6.30 Cubs 8.15 Badminton	<b>17</b> 10.00 Classic Cantonese Fellowship in the hall 6.30 Youth Club	<b>18</b> 9.30 – 12.30 Property Working Party 7.00 Barn Dance
<b>19</b> 10.30 Morning service	<b>20</b> 9.45 Pushchair Club 10.00 Shall we talk? 7.30 Scouts	<b>21</b> 9.30 Communion 10.15 Contact Choir 10.30 Men's Coffee 10.30 Bible Study 5.00 Rainbows 6.00 Brownies	<b>22</b> 9.30 Morning prayers by Zoom 10.00 Classic Cantonese Fellowship in church	<b>23</b> 6.00 Beavers 6.30 Cubs 8.15 Badminton	<b>24</b> 10.30 Friendship Café 6.30 Youth Club	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b> 10.30 Morning service  6.30 Healing service with communion	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> 9.30 Communion 10.30 Men's Coffee 10.30 Bible Study	<b>29</b> 9.30 Morning prayers by Zoom  <b>Half term</b>	<b>30</b> 8.15 Badminton	<b>31</b> 10.00 Classic Cantonese Fellowship in the hall	

## Lettings needs Keys!



Over the last dozen years, keys have been lent to over 200 users of our premises. Most of these users have returned keys promptly when they are no longer required. **Some keys have not been returned.**

If you have a key to the **Church** or to the **Community Hall** that you no longer expect to need, please could you return it, with your name, preferably in an envelope, either to **Anne Kemp** or to **Janice Smith** or to the **Office Post Box**.

**Thank You**

## Prayer space

Prayer Space is a quiet time of guided contemplation and worship. Come as you are.

It meets at 8.00 pm on the second Sunday evening of alternative months.

The next Prayer Space will be on 8<sup>th</sup> June.



## 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**



# Shall We Talk? Farm Trip

On a bright but windy Saturday morning, 6<sup>th</sup> April, a merry coachload of *Shall we Talk?* participants, accompanied by others in cars, set off from Church for Southfields Farm in Coleshill.

Our trip was kindly organised by Diane Webb who knows Farmer John and Southfields Farm very well.

We met many different animals, including donkeys, alpacas, sheep, cows, chickens, guinea pigs, ducks, goats and a very, very noisy pig! Many of the youngsters cuddled the guinea pigs and some brave souls went into a small enclosure with the goats. There were also trailer rides around the farm, games to play in the yard and time to chat over coffee.

Before lunch we enjoyed the story of the Good Samaritan, presented in a large barn by the local Open the Book Team. Some of the young people were very enthusiastic robbers and one of the donkeys had a starring role. After this there was the chance to cuddle some baby lambs under the watchful eyes of their mothers. This was the highlight of the day for many.

Then, after our picnics, Farmer John took us on a circular walk around the farm. It was wonderful to be in the open countryside and to feel the warmth of the sun shining upon us. The gusty wind was a bit annoying, but it was lovely to see the green fields and the fast-flowing river. Parts were quite muddy, but everyone managed okay. John had thoughtfully parked a tractor and trailer at the bottom of the hill to spare people the final climb.

Southfields is a small mixed farm. John has many visits from schools and other groups. He loves to show them where our food comes from and to share the Gospel. John told me that he has never known a winter and spring as wet as this one. The wheat he sowed was drowned and then the oil seed rape he planted failed too. He will now be sowing herbal leys on his fields to earn some money from his arable land. Farming is a difficult business to be in.

We all had a wonderful day. We shared in new experiences, learned new things and enjoyed being together. We are so grateful to John and his team on the farm who made us so welcome and looked after us so well and to Diane and Yan for organizing the trip.

Cathy Coleman



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