



Messenger

Solihull Methodist Church

Will it, won't it? September 2025

Would it rain – that was the question. After much deliberation it was decided that we needed gazebos, just in case! In the event it was a wise decision because there was a shower just as the cooking started and before people started to arrive. As the photo shows there was also a rainbow. Fortunately, it stayed dry for the rest of the evening

Around 50 came along to enjoy hot dogs and Chinese drumsticks cooked by Chef and Chef (Malcolm Evans and Chris Tucker). The sound team had rigged up speakers outdoors and with Andrew Hawker playing the keyboard all joined in the service.



We heard a very clear message that in our lives “We are all influencers” and of course others influence us. This simple message was demonstrated with smooth and rough stones collected from a beach. Over time the rough edges had been knocked off the rough ones to make them smooth by rubbing against each other as the tides went in and out. During our lives we rub up against others and influence others by our actions.

Through songs and readings, the message rang through of what we can be and achieve if we open our minds to others. We can help make a better world by letting our own views and values be seen.

This was so well done by our Greener Church group. The service was relevant, simple, interesting and easy to understand.

Many thanks to the Team

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Church Family News

Birth

Baptism



William Ding was born to Katherine Tan and Michael Ding on 21st July in Penang. He is seen here with Katherine and big, proud sister Charlotte.

Nicolas David was baptised during the morning service on Sunday 3rd August. Nicolas is the son of Sam and Doro and brother of Mara.



75th Birthday



Richard Beattie celebrated his 75th birthday on 19th July at Ardenlea with his family.

80th Birthday



Brenda Mackey was 80 on 22nd August. She celebrated with her family and friends.

Tina's Ordination



Congratulations to Tina Brooker who was ordained as a minister during the Methodist Conference at the end of June. Her ordination was held in Shrewsbury Abbey. Some church members watched the live streaming in the church hall.

99th Birthday



Stan Field, seen here with his daughter Cheryl as he celebrated his 99th birthday on Sunday 17th August. Congratulations Stan

Farewell



Best wishes to Colin Price who has moved to Bradford on Avon to be near his son Chris.

Joan Davies

13 September 1948 – 9th June 2025



Joan was born to Frederick and Marjorie Harrison. She was a wonderful wife to Fred, fabulous mum to Katy and Rebecca and a

grandma to their Alex and Anna, and Caitlin. She was mum to Elaine and and 'grandma-Joan' to Max, Miles and Mason.

She was the church administrator at Solihull Methodist Church when Rev Mike Crockett was the minister. She was a regular worshipper and had joined the monthly rambles.

Joan's husband Fred read this heartfelt eulogy at Joan's funeral

After Forty years I was a soldier turned man
Worn out by the world, devoid of a plan
I had two cherished daughters, a past rich and wide
Yet loss left me hollow, with nothing inside

Then, quite out of the blue along came Joan
She too had a similar tale of her own
A widow, a daughter, a mother so strong
Much like me, she was battling along

They say I could talk - and Joan, she could listen
With a quiet compassion that made my eyes glisten
Our lives were like magnets, proving the fact
That total opposites often attract

She would choose white where I chose black
I'd leap too quickly; she'd pull me back.
I'd plot neat rows in the garden bed
She'd prefer wildflowers roaming instead

Where I saw the thrill, she would weigh up the cost
Where I charged in, she thought... 'What will be lost?'
But though we often differed, her heart stayed true
Disagreeing, but still - always seeing me through

A marriage - not made in heaven, some might claim...
But I ask - aren't heaven and happiness one and the same?

For what we shared put us firmly at ease
And sailed us together through life's stormy seas

Together we wandered, with joy and with pride
With tears, love and laughter by each other's side
Four daughters between us, their lives in full bloom,
Eight lovely grandkids now light up every room

Joan was so much more than a partner or wife
She poured every inch of herself into life
A voice in the choir, a carer, a friend
Someone on whom everyone could depend

Her joy could be felt by the birds in the air
She nurtured and loved her pugs with such care
In everyone that she met she implanted a smile
With warmth, with love and inimitable style

And oh, how she glowed, how her spirit shone through,
With strength and with kindness - so honest, so true
Though the world may cause turmoil and shadows may fall
Joan showed how love and kindness prevails over all

So farewell, my dearest, my light, my guide
The one who always stood steadfast by my side
Though you've gone ahead your light will still shine
You'll be forever the beat inside this heart of mine

Fred Davies

Molly Bird

17 March 1929 – 29 June 2025

Molly was born to parents Cissie and William Davies on their dairy farm in the Shropshire village of Moreton Say. Alongside her older sister Phyllis, Molly had a loving and happy childhood, growing up on a busy farm.

Cissie was a hard-working woman running her home, raising her daughters and supporting the family farm. She was particularly gifted in baking preserving and dairy produce...also a prize-winning cheesemaker! In turn Molly and her sister became prolific cooks. In her early twenties, Molly married the young son of a neighbouring farmer and together they started a retail dairy business. A year later, tragically, he died. Molly decided to enrol at Staffordshire's Mill Meece training school, to train as a policewoman and she joined the regular police force in Walsall.

Molly took up lodgings with Mr and Mrs Ernest Bird who introduced their nephew, Norman Bird and there began a long-distance courtship, she in Walsall and Norman in Liverpool which flourished into an engagement and they married on 27th March 1954.

By 1961 Molly was a busy mother, looking after 3 children Pauline, Catherine & Roger, running her home in Liverpool and using the many skills learnt from her mother. The couple had an allotment where they grew masses of fruit, vegetables and flowers. They became expert at producing sweet peas and chrysanthemums.

They holidayed in a caravan, by the sea in north Wales. For the next 17 years every school holiday was taken there with the extended family pitched on the same small, basic but utterly idyllic site.



By 1971 the family moved to Solihull. Together, over many years, they transformed what was a tired and draughty old house into a comfortable and practical house for a busy family.

Central to Molly's family life was a strong and enduring faith. For the last 55 years she immersed herself in our church life: sitting on committees, undertaking pastoral work, organising events, flower arranging, coffee mornings and several times appearing as a model when the ladies Contact group held fashion shows. At the same time, she became a doctors' receptionist at the surgery in Dorridge, a role she loved.

In 1979 Molly and Norman wanted to celebrate their silver wedding anniversary by attending a dinner dance at Chateau Impney. They undertook dancing lessons and celebrated their landmark anniversary in true style. Also, in 1979 Molly's daughter Pauline married Jon in our church.

As Molly approached retirement, she became a regular volunteer steward for the National Trust at Packwood House. For 25 years she served there, making friends and baking a cake for which her fellow stewards donated change to Marie Curie. The National Trust presented her with a 25 years' service award.

At the same time, Molly was also volunteering with Marie Curie as an administrator in their Solihull offices and again achieved more than 25 years' service only stopping latterly in 2020 due to lockdown. Marie Curie nominated her for a National Award and on 4 July 2019 in the Palace of Westminster she was presented with a British Citizen Award and Certificate of Honour.



Always sociable, always loving, always a smile, always pleased to see you.....all this crystalised around a dining table with Molly.



Iain Waddell was born during the second world war on the Mull of Kintyre, where his mother was stationed while his father was serving on HMS Nimrod. However, the family returned to Glasgow when he was 2. Iain became a Cub in 1951 and remained in scouting for the rest of his life.

In his career as a social worker, he cared for others and this is a large part of the man we knew. He visited folk in the wilds of Scotland, where he often needed a snow-shovel in his car to get through to his next client. He also chose to care for children with special needs, many of whom were introduced by him to the Scouting movement.

Iain enjoyed the Gang Shows in particular and performed in one for the first time when he was 8. He said it helped a "boy who was backward at coming forward". He later performed in gang shows in places such as Glasgow, Aberdeen and Birmingham. As an adult he helped to run scout camps abroad including some for disabled scouts, exploring Denmark, Switzerland, Norway, France and Italy to name but a few, some of them on a converted double decker bus.

He became the director of many successful Solihull Gang shows spanning from the 90s to the last show in 2012. He was National Activity Adviser for Scout Entertainment, visiting gang shows to assess whether the coveted red neckerchief could be awarded. His travels took him from Exeter to Inverness and by

Iain Waddell

31 August 1943 – 15 July 2025

2018 he had visited 83 gangs, but he lost count after that!

In 2010, Iain became Assistant Cub Scout Leader for our church, and for 10 years as Group Scout Leader, standing down not far off his 80th birthday. Iain's dedication to Scouting was recognised with a medal of merit, a silver acorn and bar and lastly, in 2013 when, as well as getting a long service award, he received the Association's highest award, the Silver Wolf with a citation of 'Exceptional Service to Scouting.'

When Iain came to Solihull in 1986, besides scouting, he formed a concert party raising money for charity, producing and choreographing the numbers. He performed with several local groups – Solihull Operatic Society, St Alphege, BMOS and Astwood Bank Operatic Society. He directed The Pirates of Penzance, (Broadway Version) in 2012 which won the NODA Regional Production Award for Best Musical, and Brigadoon in 2016. Apparently his attempts to instil authentic Scottish accents for Brigadoon met with sadly limited success!

Many here in Solihull will have known Iain best for being in SMASH. He was the director for the first production in 1988 and was a stalwart member. He created show logos and designed and painted sets. He also appeared on stage in many roles, often as an upper-class gent. Although he was obviously not well, he was delighted and determined to be on stage for this year's SMASH production, Peter Pan, his 100th musical.

As a social worker and a scout leader he dedicated his life to others. As a performer and dramatic producer he channelled his creativity to entertain, and to develop the confidence of young people. As they say in scouting, Iain has Gone Home. His service, kindness and friendship will be remembered for many years to come and his focus was on doing good things.

Minister's Message

On Saturday 16th August, I climbed the highest mountain in Britain – Ben Nevis.

The skies were blue, the sun was warm perhaps too warm for such a climb and the challenge was far greater than my earlier ascent of Snowdon. I was bitten by midges (and am still feeling the effects!), and for three days afterwards my whole body ached. But even with the struggle, I can truly say: **I enjoyed it, and I am thankful I returned safely, having seen others fall and need help on the mountain.**

In the world we live in today – with its conflicts, divisions, and struggles it is easy to think there are not many good people left. Sadly, even in religious circles, and the church included. But this climb reminded me: there are still many wonderful God's people in our world.

Halfway up the mountain, when I was weary and unsure how I even looked, three teenage boys stopped and offered me Haribo sweets. That small act of kindness gave me new strength for nearly two miles of walking. Along the way, countless strangers encouraged me with words like *"You can do it"* and *"You've got this."* When I would stop to catch my breath and sing, others – though tired themselves – told me, *"I wish I had your energy."*

I witnessed even greater kindness. One lady fell badly, and two nurses and a doctor stayed with her for more than two hours, sacrificing their own climb to care for her until an air ambulance arrived. Later, when I met them again on the way down, they thanked me and others for our words of encouragement – but in truth, they were the ones who inspired me with their compassion.

At the summit, I spent an hour resting and reading a book by one of my dearest friends, **Deborah Install**. Her book, ***A Robot in the Garden***, is a warm, funny, and moving story about unlikely friendship and the power of healing. It is truly an adorable read, and I wholeheartedly recommend it to anyone



looking for a story that lifts the heart and stirs the soul. Some of you may not realise how much joy I find in reading, but I truly do, and that quiet hour atop Ben Nevis, with Deb's wonderful book in hand, was one of the sweetest and most memorable moments of the entire climb.



In the end, I completed the 10.15-mile round trip in 10 hours, 32 minutes, and 47 seconds. I had set out alone – my husband Allan had planned to join me, but his squash league match was rescheduled so I walked without him, I was never truly alone. The mountain was filled with kindness.

Life is a climb. It is tough, but with others alongside us – encouraging and lifting us we get there. Let us keep loving one another as we face the challenges in our lives, and as we support others in theirs.

This climb was in support of **Entraide**, a charity close to my heart that works with refugees, asylum seekers, and vulnerable migrants in Solihull and beyond, helping them to find dignity, safety, and belonging. If you would like to support this good cause, please give through **Solihull Methodist Church**.

Galatians 6:9-10 (NIV)

"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have the opportunity, let us do good to all people,"

Reflection

The countless acts of kindness I witnessed on Ben Nevis from strangers offering sweets and encouragement to the medical professionals staying with someone in need reminded me that goodness still abounds in the world. Each act of encouragement and selfless care, no matter how small, mirrors God's love and reminds us that life's challenges are always easier when we lift one another up. In our own lives, let us take every opportunity to do good, encourage others, and share the love of Christ in tangible ways.

Together, step by step, we can make the climb of life a little lighter for those who need us most.

Snowdon Climb

On 19th July, a group of 12 of us took on the challenge of climbing the highest mountain in Wales in support of **Entraide**. Every step we took up the mountain, we believed, was a step towards restoring dignity to a human being created by God, someone who, through no choice of their own, has had to leave their birth land and begin life anew here in Solihull.

Entraide exists to support refugees, asylum seekers, and other vulnerable migrants in Solihull and the surrounding area, helping them integrate into society and rebuild their lives. The charity also trains professionals who support Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC), equipping them to respond with understanding, compassion, and safeguarding care.

Our climb was not just a physical journey, but a statement of hope: everyone deserves the chance of a good life, to belong,



and to thrive. We are proud to have walked and climbed together in solidarity with those Entraide serves.

Let us not forget that asylum seekers and their children are God's beloved, and they deserve to be understood, loved, welcomed, and safeguarded as Christ himself would welcome them. For as our Lord reminds us, *'I was a stranger and you welcomed me'* (Matthew 25:35).

My name

I want to share something important with you from my heart. Recently, I have noticed that some people have started calling me "Rev Molly." While I understand this may be meant in jest or casually, for me it does not feel right.

I would like to kindly and clearly ask that we not use "Rev Molly." Please continue to call me simply "Molly," as you always have. That is how I feel most comfortable, and it helps me to serve among you with openness and joy.

You may notice that in letters or emails I sometimes sign as "Rev Molly." That is because it is my official title and appropriate in formal correspondence. But in our fellowship and daily life together, I do not want to be addressed that way.

Just keep calling me "Molly," as you always have. That's who I am with you, and that's how I want to be known among you. Titles are not what matter most, what **matters is the love, kindness, and faith** we share together as God's people.

Thank you for understanding and for respecting this. It means a lot to me.

Rev Molly



SMASH's musical next March will be Seussical.

This is a fun show featuring famous characters from the stories of Dr Seuss who discover the rewards of helping a friend, in not giving up, in keeping a promise.

As well as the main characters (the Cat in the Hat, Horton the Elephant, Gertrude McFuzz, Sour Kangaroo, JoJo and the Whos), there are lots of opportunities to take part on and off-stage.

There is an introductory afternoon at 2.30 pm on **Sunday 7th September** in the church hall to find out more about the characters and the story, and auditions will be on **Sunday September 28th**. Please email smash@solihull-methodist.org.uk for further details.

Fitter Housegroup BBQ



The Fitter housegroup were blessed with a beautiful evening when they held their annual summer bbq in Brenda Mackey's garden.

After admiring Brenda's beautiful garden, housegroup members and partners (16 in all) sat down to eat the chicken kebabs and sausages expertly cooked by Richard Balmer.

It was an excellent evening of food, fun and fellowship.

Prayer Box



We pray for:

- Margaret Nicol and family after the sad death of their daughter in law and also for Margaret as she recovers from her stay in hospital after breaking her femur
- Colin Price as he moves to Bradford on Avon
- All those starting at new schools and colleges with the start of a new academic year.



It was a really good afternoon on Saturday 12th July when KK Hung gave a piano recital in aid of the church project. All present marvelled at KK's piano playing. The recital was compered expertly by Lawrie Rumens who provided the background of the piano pieces that KK played.

Church Project Entraide



KK presented a cheque for £9,200 to Felix Kupay during the morning service on Sunday 24th August. This was the money raised in the last 12 months for Entraide. KK had raised the most money from his piano recitals. Felix runs Entraide and in thanking everyone he described their work amongst refugees and asylum seekers in Birmingham. He thanked everyone for their contribution and efforts in the fund raising event by walking, climbing, dancing, playing and singing together.



Hong Kongers Choir

At the morning service on Sunday 13th July the choir practised the song along with all the actions, they were planning on singing at the Circuit World Service. The Circuit's World Service was held at Selly Oak Methodist Church later in the day.

60th Anniversary of Ordination

Rev Dorothy Lloyd Williams recently celebrated 60 years since her ordination. She was the minister at Solihull for the year 1987 – 88. She had come to Solihull in 1983 when her husband was the minister until 1987, and then she took over as John left Solihull to take up a position with Methodist Homes for the Aged.

The Lloyd Williams retired to Monmouth and the Monmouth Church held a special service to commemorate Dorothy's ordination as a deacon at the Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, USA in 1965.

Dorothy is seen in the photo cutting the special cake (with her picture on the front) at the reception after the special service at Monmouth Church.

Dorothy came to England in 1966 and studied at Richmond Theological College where she met her future husband, John. She later transferred her credentials to the British Methodist Conference and was ordained as a presbyter at the Norwich Conference in 1981.



New President and Vice President

The Methodist conference was held in Telford at the end of July. It welcomed **Rev Richard Andrews** as the new president and **Matthew Forsyth** as vice president for the next year.



The Revd Richard Andrew is currently chair of the Darlington District. Growing up in rural North Yorkshire, he studied philosophy and theology in London.

He trained at Wesley House, Cambridge before joining a circuit in Sheffield, training ministers and teaching theology in a university setting as Director of York Institute and working in the Connexional Team as Director of Learning and Development.

He has a deep passion for the renewal and refreshing of the Methodist Church and the rediscovery of its DNA as a growing, inclusive, evangelistic and justice-seeking church.

He is married to Debbie a former teacher and now a Church and Community Worker in Teesdale with two grown up children, Tom and Becky.

He enjoys walking, reading, hospitality, guitar and watching Middlesbrough FC.

The Revd Richard Andrew says, "I am humbled and excited by the nomination of the Conference. I have always believed that it is essential that we live by hope and I am really encouraged by everything we are doing together as a Church as we join together with God as we seek to be a grow the Church.

"God is bringing something new to birth amongst us and I pray we might be open to the leading of the Spirit as we recognise that and follow in the footsteps of Jesus."

Matthew Forsyth is a local preacher and steward. He is the Mission Team Leader in the Northampton Methodist District. Within this role, Matt leads a diverse team of lay and ordained leaders.

As Mission team Leader, Matt works to see a flourishing sustainable network of circuits of worshipping communities that are growing in their outworking of the mission of God. That means areas like New Place for New People (NPNP), Justice, Dignity and Solidarity (JDS), and the lay leadership development development form key parts of his role. Matt is a member of the Missions Committee and currently serves on the NPNP guiding team.



Having studied Theology, worked as an estate agent, and spent time working as a fundraiser for All We Can to name a few roles, Matt remains firm in his calling to lay leadership. As such, Matt serves as a trustee of a Christian Schools Charity in his home city, Peterborough, and acts as a mentor to teenagers in his spare time.

With his wife Amy, his three children, and bouncy cockapoo he is a very busy man. Matt has a deep desire to listen, encourage, and play his part in the flourishing of a church.

Matt Forsyth says, "I am humbled to serve the church in this role. I am deeply aware of the responsibility to represent the voice of the lay leaders across the Connexion.

"I hope to listen well and work in partnership with the President so that together we can encourage the church to continue its journey on becoming an inclusive, justice seeking and evangelistic church."

Extra Church Council

On Monday 4th August, an extra Church Council meeting was called by Rev Molly, which was subsequently held on Tuesday 19th August. This was to discuss a grant which had been applied for by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) to support the work of Solihull Methodist Church (SMC) via Shall We Talk? in helping Hong Kongers settle in the UK.

There were however two main concerns and the meeting had been called to discuss these. The first concern was the way in which the original application had been made. Rev Molly indicated that she was in contact about this with people and bodies within the Methodist Church.

The second concern was that no paperwork had been received. So, there are no written details of the terms and conditions of the grant.

Two subgroups were set up to consider and address both concerns in more detail. These will report back to the Church Council with recommendations, including whether, or not we should accept the grant.

Stewards

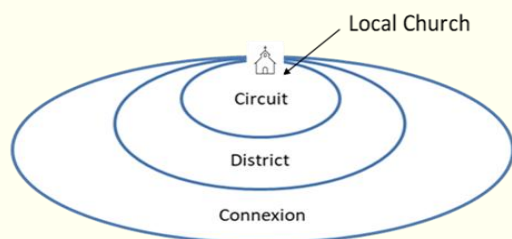
Get updated on recent developments in our own Circuit and District

Find out about some new ways that British Methodists are planning to work together differently in changing times. Marjorie Roper was a Circuit Steward until recently. She is keen to use her experience for the benefit of everyone in Solihull Methodist. She is planning to work with some of the other experienced people in our congregation to offer information in an informal, conversational session. Repeat or follow-up sessions can also be planned to suit people's interests and availability. There will be a session on

Sunday 7th September, after church in Room 4, and will last no longer than an hour. Bring your refreshments - and questions!

Marjorie is more than happy to do the same session on

Thursday 4th September at 7.30pm via Zoom if that is helpful. Please *get in touch with Marjorie* if you would like her to do this and to receive a joining link.



LETTINGS OFFICER REQUIRED

SOLIHULL METHODIST CHURCH

Blossomfield Road, Solihull, B91 1LG

10 hours per week, working location by agreement.

Salary: Real Living Wage (£12.60 ph), plus extra for relevant qualifications and experience.

We are seeking someone with excellent spoken and written English to handle all room hire at our busy church premises situated in central Solihull, next to train and bus stations. Full training will be provided but experience with IT systems is essential.

We are looking for someone with excellent organisational, communication and interpersonal skills. You must have the ability to work on your own as well as part of a team, to ensure the smooth running of this important aspect of our church work.

You must be willing to support the ethos of the Methodist Church.

Please contact office@solihull-methodist.org.uk to request further details, an applicant specification, job description and application form. **Closing date 30th September 2025.**

Curious about Christian Faith?

You are invited to join a short course to explore the Christian faith. 'Alpha Series 3, what's it all about?

Alpha is an exciting journey in which we learn and explore the Christian faith together, a space for you to ask questions and discuss with others.

Each week we begin with sharing food together and have a talk on a Theme e.g. What does the Holy Spirit do? Does God heal today? How can I share my faith with others? How do I make the most of the rest of my life? If English is your 2nd language don't worry, we aim to make this course accessible to all.

Alpha

Is this for you? Come and talk to one of the team and find out more? We will be running an 5 week Alpha course starting on:

Wednesday 6:00 pm

17th September 2025
24th September 2025
1st October 2025
8th October 2025
15th October 2025

If you would like further information, please contact

Diane Webb email



Diane Webb Phone



Fiona Beadle email



Marjorie Roper email



Or one of the Stewards team.

Open The Book - The End of a Chapter

The summer term marks the end of an era for our Open the Book team as Jackie Farmer stands down as our organiser after many years of devoted hard work. Our small group of church volunteers, go into primary school assemblies to read and act out stories using *The Storyteller Bible*.

We started in April 2012 by visiting Oak Cottage School when Mike Crocket was our minister. Our Family worker, Tina Brooker, supported us in the beginning and would come and play her guitar and get the children singing. This is when we developed our tradition of singing an appropriate song at the end of our story telling, which is not part of the usual Open the Book pattern.



Occasionally, the more adept ones amongst us such as Judith Farndon would write songs and at other times, we would use some of the good old Young Church favourites such as 'Who Built the Ark'.

Our group also decided that it was helpful to convert the readings, from the Storyteller Bible, into an easy script rather like the dramatised readings we sometimes have here in church.

After hearing about our initial efforts, a member of another Methodist Church whose grandchildren attended Monkspath Jr & Infant School asked us to consider taking our Bible Story telling there. Having heard about this, Tina made the initial visits to Monkspath to get us started there and off we went.

At the request of Ros Hopkins and Jane Garnett, Cranmore Infant School was then added to the list of schools we visited in the summer of 2015.

We visit each school once each half term, usually taking the same story to each of them. We are not allowed actively to seek to convert the children to Christianity, so we present the stories with no comment. Sometimes the teacher in charge at the school will emphasise the message from the reading.

At the end of each session we pray and always begin with the words, 'We are going to say a prayer now, if you want it to be your prayer, please say 'Amen', which means 'I agree' at the end.'

Through Churches Together in Central Solihull, we have had members of the Team from Solihull URC & St Helen's. This has been one of the strengths of the group.

Without Jackie's great work we would not have achieved what we have. She has organised all of the visits and co-ordinated our presentations in addition to taking part, usually explaining what story we are doing before drawing it all to a conclusion at the end. She has now decided that it is time to stand down.

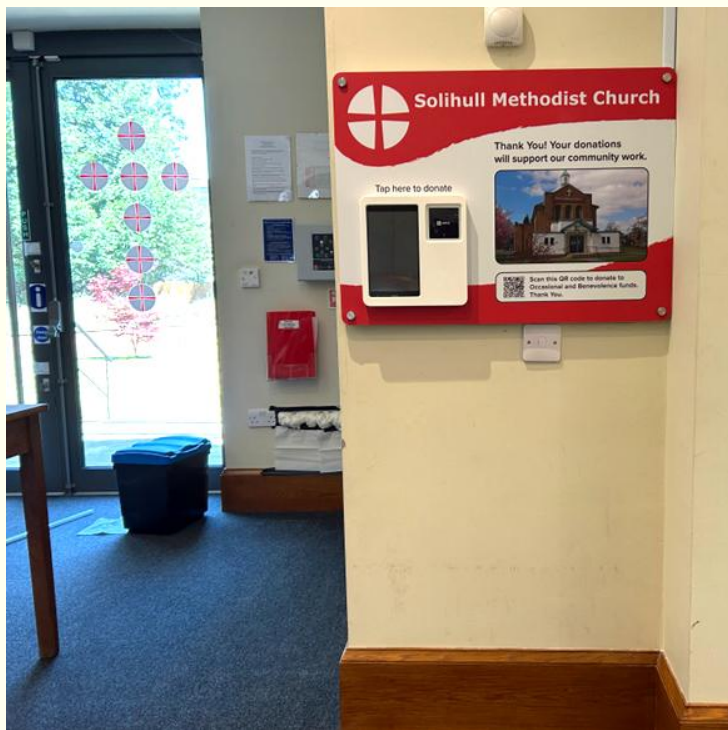
On Wednesday, 25th June, Chris Carrington, one of our storytellers from St Helen's Church organised a 'thank you' party for Jackie which was attended by members old and new. She was presented with gifts as a token of our appreciation for many years of devoted work.



It is hoped that our Open the Book group will continue but we do need extra members. So please give some thought to joining our team, if you are able. We realise that it might seem a little daunting but, trust me, it is great fun and very rewarding and the team are very supportive of each other. The children in the schools give such positive feedback – they really enjoy our efforts. Please speak to Jane Garnett, Christine Burr or Ros Hopkins if you need more information.

Alan Faulkner





NEW! Tap and Donate

There is now a fixed contactless donations terminal on the wall in the vestibule of the Church. The terminal is intended for donations to the general church fund for people who don't carry cash.

You can choose to donate £5, £10, £25 or £50, or choose your own amount .

To Gift Aid – fill in a Gift Aid Envelope with your details and mark for 'Church Fund' and hand the envelope in.

Using this Machine is very straightforward. If you get in a mess, don't panic. The screens will reset and cancel the transaction after a few tens of seconds if not completed.

We would encourage regular giving which helps with budgeting and which can be done through standing orders and debiting or through the envelope system.

Please Gift Aid if you can (Talk to David Grey).

Christmas Angel project calling all knitters!



Please help us to share God's love and bless our community at Christmas time with the gift of a knitted angel carrying a Christmas message from our church.

Based on a similar initiative in 2019 we are encouraging our church family and friends to help us by knitting angels to distribute in public spaces before Christmas for people to find and keep. Each angel will have a gift tag with a simple Christmas message from our church, as well as the church website address and QR code to enable people to find out more about our activities.

The simple knitting pattern can be downloaded here:
<http://www.christmasangel.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Christmas-Angel.pdf>

Angels can be any colour to reflect the diversity within our community. Please include a loop on the head to enable them to be hung on trees and hedges. A cotton wool ball is the perfect size to stuff an angel's head.

We would like to collect all the knitted angels by the end of November to allow time to add the gift tag and be ready to distribute them early in December. For further information or for a printed copy of the pattern please speak to Fiona Beadle or e-mail xmas.angel@solihull-methodist.org.uk

New Church Project



The church project supporting Entraide has now drawn to a close and we are looking forward to the new project starting in the autumn. This will support the Awareness Foundation.

The Awareness Foundation is a Christian charity set up in the UK for the purposes of peace-building in the Middle East. It was established in 2003 by Rev Nadim Nassar, a Syrian-born Anglican priest who travels extensively to encourage enlightened dialogue among peoples from different faiths. Many of us will remember Nadim preaching at Solihull on a couple of occasions, once at a Maundy Thursday evening service.

The Awareness Foundation is ecumenical and its board members include representatives from the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of England, Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist Churches, the Greek Orthodox Church, and several evangelical churches.

In the Middle East, the Foundation has two main missions: to "build up understanding between the East and the West", and to "strengthen and sustain Christians" in the region.

Green Matters



Keep fruit in the Fridge?

Every biological or chemical reaction speeds up as the temperature rises and slows down as it falls. Indeed, some biological actions become dormant below certain temperatures. Grass, for example, stops growing in winter when the soil temperature gets down to about 5°C. This is why the invention of refrigeration has been such a benefit in keeping food fresh. In earlier times staff in the big houses would have to cut out ice from their lakes in winter and stack it in ice houses to store food in the summer. I remember in the 1940s always putting milk in the cellar during the summer because it was the coolest place in the house and would otherwise 'go off'.

We have recently started keeping some fruit in the fridge rather than in a bowl. Some fruit, especially the softer fruits like nectarines, seem to go from unripe to rotten in 2 or 3 days. Fruit is a living material even after picked and, with the help of bacteria and fungi on the skin and in the air, naturally starts to decompose so that, when it falls to the ground the nutrients in it can be more easily absorbed by the soil. So, the cooler the better to save waste.



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Recycling News

Morrisons will now recycle your coffee pods from your coffee machine. The collection point is after the pharmacy.

Boots will now recycle tablet blister packs



Reducing the need to water a lawn

The BBC recently highlighted an unseen advantage of a robot lawnmower. The mower continually shaves off small bits of grass which it leaves on the lawn. These shavings act as a mulch which helps to keep the moisture in the ground.



Green Questionnaire Oct 2021		One per household
<p>This short questionnaire is a chance to share your achievements and ideas with the rest of the congregation and see the progress being made towards a 'greener' world. They will be commented in the December Messenger. We don't need to know names. Do continue overleaf if you run out of space.</p>		
A. GETTING AROUND:		
1. Do you have a car? Yes No (please circle the Yes or No) If No go to Q8		
2. Have you used public transport, cycled or walked more since 5 years ago? Yes No		
3. Have you changed your car (or use of it) in the last 5 years? Yes No If No go to Q7		
4. Does the new car do more miles/gallon? Yes No		
5. Is it a hybrid? Yes No Or, all electric? Yes No		
6. If you have 2 cars, is one all electric for short journeys? Yes No N/A		
7. Do you usually try to share a car when you know of others going to the same event? Yes No		
8. What more do you think can be done to reduce car use?		
B. YOUR GARDEN:		
1. Do you have a garden? Yes No If No and nowhere else to grow plants outside, go to Section C		
2. Do you actively try to encourage birds, insects and other wildlife? Yes No If Yes, please tell us what you do		
C. USE OF PLASTIC:		
1. Are you using less 'single use' plastic than 5 years ago? Yes No If Yes, please tell us how you managed it		
D. RECYCLING:		
1. Are you recycling more than 5 years ago? Yes No		
2. Do you use the Church recycling service? Yes No If Yes, do you mention it to friends and neighbours? Yes No		
3. What other things do you think the Church or Seaball Council could recycle?		
E. ELECTRICITY AND GAS USE:		
1. Do you use more or less energy than 5 years ago? Electricity Yes Same No Gas Yes Same No		
2. In the last 5 years have you added any insulation to your home? Yes No Replaced old light bulbs with LED? Yes No Replaced any appliances, TVs etc with more efficient ones? Yes No		
3. What other ways do you think electricity and gas use could be reduced?		
Please return to the Church vestibule or office Very Many Thanks! Greener Church Group		

Green survey Following on from our Eco-Church Gold Award success we plan to invite the congregation in October to repeat a 'green' survey first done in 2021 to discover how much progress the Church has made in 'going greener' in the last 4 years.

TWAM We will also be organising another collection of tools for TWAM – Tools With a Mission – who refurbish tools and send them to training centres in countries in Africa so that the unemployed can learn skills, find work and lift themselves and their families from poverty. 'Tools' now include everything from computers to sewing machines. Bring them along on any Sunday in October or let Linda or John Innes know if you need them collected.

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, Sandra Ker.

We are proud to be a GREEN CHURCH caring for God's Creation

Churches and Mosques together for Peace in Togo

PROCURA. (Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa)

Promoting dialogue and coexistence in areas of conflict in Africa.

“My prejudices about Christians have been shattered. Thank you for bringing us together and transforming our relationships with one another.” The senior Imam beamed as he spoke on 11 June to the group of Christian and Muslim local leaders, women and young people gathered in the town of Dapaong in the far north of Togo near the border with Burkina Faso. It was the first time that members of the local Christian and Muslim communities had come together in this way to share a programme of dialogue, consultation and training on how to understand each other’s faith and promote continued tolerance, respect, coexistence and peace between local faith communities. When the Conference began, Christians had sat on one side of the room, Muslims on the other. Conversation was polite and formal. Just 24 hours later, Christians and Muslims, young and old, men and women were mingling together, enjoying relaxed conversations, eating and laughing together.

Togo is a primarily Christian country, but like its West African neighbours, the far north of the country it is predominantly Muslim. Relations between Christians and Muslims in the coastal regions of West Africa have for centuries been characterised by mutual tolerance and peaceful coexistence, but increasing levels of extremist violence across the Sahel region, have been spreading further south. Since 2021, villages in northern Togo have been subject to a number of attacks by extremist groups (associated with Al Qaeda), crossing the border from Burkina Faso, killing citizens, destroying property and crops, causing displacement and instilling growing fear and distrust between communities.

It was a real privilege to be invited to attend a Conference entitled “Church and Mosque together for peace” arranged by our partner organisation, Procmura, which brought together local religious and community leaders. This unique meeting had been warmly welcomed by all parties. Participants shared their experiences and stories. The realisation that everyone shares common anxieties and fears about current realities and challenges and also similar aspirations for the future, affirmed the importance of such dialogue and mutual understanding. Reflecting on the Beatitudes, the participants, Christian and Muslim alike, agreed that “we all wish for blessings; we all wish for mercy; we all wish for peace.”.



“Christians and Muslims together for peace.” I was pleased to see the evident support of local people as we passed. People by the market stalls smiled, waved and gave thumbs up signs. Some even joined the march. We included a time of prayer in a market outside the central mosque.

After the Conference, the General Secretary of the Methodist Church in Togo, Rev. Emmanuel Ajavon, took me to visit some of the rural circuits in the area. Here, villagers have been profoundly impacted by the violence. A group of Methodist women told me that for many months they have been unable to go their fields for fear of attack and are therefore struggling to feed their families. Ongoing drought, caused by climate change (which is having a devastating impact across Africa) – is compounding the hardship. The Methodist Church in Togo has therefore started local self-help projects for the most vulnerable people in these isolated circuits, where they have just one Minister serving an area extending over 200 miles. These projects are making a tangible difference. This work has been significantly supported by the Capacity Building Grant of Methodist Church of Britain (MCB) World Mission Fund.

The value of the work of MCB’s partner, PROCURA cannot be overstated. Procura is an ecumenical and pan-African organisation, chaired by Nathan Samwini, a retired Methodist Bishop from Ghana. It has groups in some of the most conflicted areas of the Continent and arranges ‘grassroots’ group training in interreligious dialogue, understanding, peacebuilding and reconciliation for religious and community leaders as well as for women and youth. The gathering in Togo was made possible by a grant from the World Mission Fund of MCB.

Extremism and violence are sadly increasing and affecting millions around the globe. Their impact on communities served by our partners featured significantly in discussions with Heads of Churches during our recent Pre-Conference Consultation. It is commendable that Methodist Church partners are actively engaged in addressing this reality and that MCB is supporting peace-building initiatives amongst some of the Continent’s most vulnerable communities. Jesus said: ‘Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.’ (Matthew 5:9). Peace-making rests at the heart of the Christian gospel. We give thanks for all such efforts undertaken to fulfil this call.

Andrew Ashdown, Partnership Coordinator for Africa.



After two days of input and shared discussion participants gathered for a march through the streets of Dapaong, chanting

Soupa Talks



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

Starts again on
Wednesday 24th September
Rachel Hensley from West Midlands Police
will talk about Fraud and Cyber crime

Need to talk to your minister?

It is very simple
I am here for everyone, 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



Action for Children Collection boxes



It's the time of year when Ros Hopkins will be collecting in the Action for Children boxes.



The Messenger Team

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 the October Messenger items is
Sunday 14th September

Church Team



Rev Molly Chitokwindo
Minister
Day off - Friday



Abi Godfree
Children, Youth and Families worker



Janice Smith
Church Administrator
Tuesday - Friday



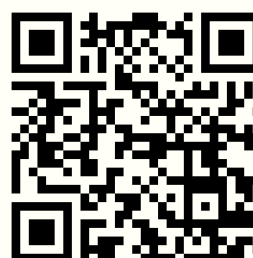
Wai Kong
Finance Assistant



Diane Webb
Pastoral and Community Worker



Chris Giles
Pastoral Coordinator



Church Office
0121 705 7367

www.solihull-methodist.org.uk

September Diary

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 9.30 Communion 10.00 Bible Study 10.30 Men's Coffee 5.00 Rainbows 6.00 Brownies	3 9.30 Morning prayers by Zoom	4 6.00 Beavers 6.30 Cubs 8.15 Badminton	5 10.00 Cantonese Fellowship 6.30 Youth Club	6
7 10.30 Morning service Rev Molly Chitokwindo 12.30 Session on Methodist circuit and district 2.30 SMASH Seusical introduction	8 9.45 Pushchair Club 10.00 Shall we talk? 7.30 Scouts	9 9.30 Communion 10.00 Bible Study 10.15 Contact Choir 10.30 Men's Coffee 5.00 Rainbows 6.00 Brownies 7.00 Youth study	10 9.30 Morning prayers by Zoom	11 6.00 Beavers 6.30 Cubs 8.15 Badminton	12 10.00 Cantonese Fellowship 10.30 Friendship cafe 6.30 Youth Club	13
14 10.30 Morning service with Holy Communion Rev Donald Ker 6.30 Space for quiet reflection	15 9.45 Pushchair Club 10.00 Shall we talk? 7.30 Scouts	16 9.30 Communion 10.00 Bible Study 10.15 Contact Choir 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 10.00 Cantonese Fellowship 6.30 Youth Club	20 10.00 Decorate the church for Harvest Festival
21 Harvest Festival 10.30 Morning service Rev Molly Chitokwindo 12.30 Church Family Lunch 1.30 Church General Meeting	22 9.45 Pushchair Club 10.00 Shall we talk? 7.30 Scouts	23 9.30 Communion 10.00 Bible Study 10.15 Contact Choir 10.30 Men's Coffee 5.00 Rainbows 6.00 Brownies 7.00 Youth Study	24 9.30 Morning prayers by Zoom 1.00 Soupa Talks	25 6.00 Beavers 6.30 Cubs 8.15 Badminton	26 10.00 Cantonese Fellowship 10.30 Friendship café 6.30 Youth Club	27
28 10.30 Morning service Wayne Hudson 2.30 SMASH auditions 6.30 Healing and Communion service Rev David Butterworth	29 9.45 Pushchair Club 10.00 Shall we talk? 7.30 Scouts	30 9.30 Communion 10.00 Bible Study 10.15 Contact Choir 10.30 Men's Coffee 5.00 Rainbows 6.00 Brownies				

Harvest Festival

Sunday 21st September
10.30 am

Rev Molly Chitokwindo
'Peace and love'



Harvest Lunch

Sunday 21st September

12.30 pm

to be followed by
General Church Family Meeting
All welcome

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

The Most Awesome Scout Camp Ever!



**Blackwell Adventure Camp
20th-22nd June**

On 20- 22nd June 2025, approximately 30 girls and boys aged between 5½ and 14 years old from 11th Solihull Methodist Scout Group went camping! For some this was the first time they had been away without their parents/carers and their first time camping! As event leaders - it was a huge privilege to be a part of this and watching the children take part in activities and experience independence. We could not have been prouder.

I'm Edward and I am a Scout.

Wow! What an absolutely amazing camp we had at Blackwell Adventure! I was a bit nervous as only new to Scouts after being in Cubs but everyone was so kind and nice.

The weather was super hot which made it perfect for our MASSIVE water fight. The Beavers made a secret plan with some other Cubs and Scouts to ambush the leaders, Laura and Hedgehog got soaked!. We hid behind the tent and when the Aly walked past - SPLASH! They were sooooo wet, and their faces were so funny! As it was so hot we ended up throwing buckets of water over each other!!!

I tried grass sledging for the first time on a really big hill. The first two rides were awesome, but then on my third go, I fell off. I wasn't the only one and thank goodness Donna was there with the first aid kits! Everyone ended up laughing (even me), but I had grass stains EVERYWHERE. My mum's still trying to wash them out!

The absolute BEST activity was Laser Quest in the woods. We played three games, and our team won two of them! I got the highest score in the last game!



I'm Dylan and I am in Cubs. I did something AMAZING - I went abseiling down this massive tower! It was like 40 feet high and I was super scared at first. Once I did it the first time, it was SO COOL! I felt like a superhero coming down the wall and did it three more times! We also did a Giant Zipwire! I have done one before but this time I got to go down with my best friend! Oh, and you should have seen the leaders on the giant zip wire - it was EPIC! They went down together, screaming their heads off. I am sure you could have heard them in Timbuktu!

We made the best pocket pizza ever. As it was so hot we weren't allowed a campfire so Hedgehog used a frying pan on the stove and YES, I put pineapple on it because pineapple on pizza is AWESOME!

We both agree the camp shop was brilliant - we spent all our money on sweets and cool stuff. I got this amazing colour-changing torch that I used after lights out!

Can't wait for next year's camp - but it's going to be really hard to beat this one!

P.S. Sorry about the water fight, leaders! (Not really!)



Scouting is open to both girls and boys and we are a fully inclusive organisation. We run Scouts on Monday night 7.30-9pm, Beavers and Cubs on a Thursday night 6-7.15pm and 6.30-8pm (term time) and offer a four week trial.

In addition, we are always looking for leaders and helpers to support. If you are interested, please get in touch!

**Blossomfield Road
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