



July/August 2025

In Touch

The monthly news bulletin of the
Herefordshire (South and East) Methodist Circuit

Greetings folks, and welcome to our Summer InTouch Magazine, we could consider it as our end of year report, or the “State of the Churches” speech.

How are we doing? In the words of one of my favourite comedians Bill Bailey, how are we doing—“Not too bad”, and reminds us that British people don’t like to be too boastful amongst their peers.

He reminds us that if you ask an Australian or an American, they will answer, “How you doing?” with “Awesome”, or “Great”. We Brits, live he says in *“cautious optimism, always expecting things to go downhill”*. Our happiness is based he says on *“Things could have been worse! Things are clearly bad, but they are not as bad as we thought that they would be. We’ve dialled down our expectations to an acceptable level of disappointment. We are eeking out our expectation in diminishing increments of reduced joy. Things are not too bad. There’s the abyss, we are not in the abyss we are in the car park and snack area adjacent to the abyss—Things are not too bad.”*

Of course this is an ironic comedy script where he is exaggerating our British cultural obsession with the phrase “Things are not too bad!”

We can of course identify this amongst ourselves, and I’ve even hear myself say it on occasions. We do need to laugh at ourselves sometimes. If you want to watch the clip it’s here—<https://youtu.be/V7d79Knc8p4>

So how are we doing, as our 3 wonderful churches and our small but perfectly formed circuit? Things are not too bad! Things could be worse! Actually we might even be approaching awesome or great, but as a Brit, I could not possibly say that could !! I will let you judge for yourselves:

We are currently financially stable, with financial plans, projecting a good future for the next 5 years. A big thank you to all our treasurers, and all you good givers, if you keep giving, and if you can increase your giving every now and again to match inflation, we will be ok. Things could be worse!



The Methodist Church

Herefordshire (South & East) **Circuit**

Continued over.....

We were worried about having, in times of uncertainty join with another circuit. No-one is telling us at the moment we have to do that. *“Things could be worse! We are not in the abyss, we are in the car park and snack area next to the abyss!”*

We are seeing growth in each of our churches, and have and will be making new members soon. If you are not currently a member, please do have a word with me, it's fairly easy. Especially if you've been a member or communicant at a different church before, we can simply transfer you in. If you've not been a member elsewhere, we can take you through a short process to bring you into membership. *“Things are not too bad.”*

Our administration and compliance is getting a lot better. We are getting there! Safeguarding—we've nearly caught up with everything we needed to do! GDPR is ok for now. We are currently working on how we report maintenance checks, PAT testing and the dreaded new thing we've found we have to do: Legionella testing! *“things could have been a lot worse!”*

You've even got a minister, a whole one, between 3 churches, and for the next 5 years. Some circuits are short of ministers, some churches share a minister with 4 other churches. *“Things are not too bad.”* I was even praised the other day, at the end of a service, I was told—*“You'll do!”* In terms of *“eeking out our expectation in diminishing increments of reduced joy.”* That was praise indeed.

Let's not mention “Risk Assessments” - as this in the school report would be logged with the dreaded comment—*“Could do better”*. Is there anyone out there that get's excited by risk assessments, or likes writing them? If so get in touch, and we can form a team.

So how do you think we are doing? Answers on a postcard please.

Conferences and Festival Season— In previous news writing I spoke of festivals and conferences, here's a bit of an update and what is coming next. I've been to the Super's Conference in Blackpool and ridden on the trams. An excellent time of collegueship, and a great time of networking. Allowing me a long conversation with Hamish Leese (our Eco person) which takes us forward on our next steps for grant funding. I met Jodie the panel solicitor we are using for selling 44 Three Elms Road. Learnt new skills on helping our churches seek their “Future Story”, and ate too much.

As you probably realised, my trip to Jerusalem was cancelled as Israeli airspace was closed due to the 12 day war with Iran. Our friend Dave is home, having been brought out via Sharm-el-Sheikh. Dave is coming to see us on 23rd July—keep that date in your diaries, and we will book in an event at least in Hereford, and may get him to other places as well.

This week we go up for a few days to Methodist Conference, another chance to network, and meet folk from all over the connexion. We are looking forward to seeing our Nigel received back into full connexion and Samantha being ordained.

Greenbelt Festival—With Caroline's good news (see below), we do now still hope to be going to Greenbelt Festival at the end of August.

3Generate—A small team of us from the circuit will be going to 3Generate on 3rd to 5th October as volunteers. Each year a number of folk half promise us to come one year to help. Could this be the year you come? There's 2000 young people coming this year. We need Stewards for my team, we need people on Caroline's reception team. We need village hosts, tea makers, crafty people, arty people. Take a look at the website and sign up. Come for the day, come for the weekend. (You get an inside tent, a bed, and a sheet, and all the food you could ever eat, we even pay your travel expenses—easy train to Birmingham International, or free parking at the NEC). <https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/ministries/children-youth-family-ministry/3generate/join-the-delivery-team/>

In other News— after filling in one small form, and sitting nervously in a Zoom waiting room biting my nails, we have a £21k grant to cover half the costs of our churches' solar panels! (*It could have been worse!*).

District Stuff— Don't forget we have a chance to sing with the District Choir on Monday 30th, St Johns 7pm. And to attend the welcome to the new District Chair, at Walsall Methodist Church 30th August 3pm. As of 31st August 2025, I will no longer be Deputy Chair, but will still be sitting on the District Property and Resourcing Mission Committees. (So I can still be in reach of the money for grants). So keep dreaming big, and keep scheming, what missional projects do we want grants for? The new Women's Breakfast has just had a £500 grant for their awayday.

An Update from Caroline—It's a while since I've given an update on my health. After my operation we were told it was unlikely I would need further treatment, but I just had to have one more scan as a final check. Unfortunately that scan showed up cancer in a lymph node, so a further scan was needed to see if the cancer had spread to anywhere else in my body. We've had a very worrying time, first waiting for the scan, and then the results. Yesterday I was told that the cancer hasn't spread. You can't imagine the relief I felt, hearing this. I will need a further operation, and there will be further treatment, which hasn't been decided on yet, but with yesterday's news, I think I can cope with the next stage. Thank you for all your love and care.

So how are we doing—Not too bad!

Every blessing, *Phil*

I take my HAT off to CAP but ...

You may remember my article on the cuts in disability payments (May issue). I sent it to Church Action on Poverty and received a courteous reply from Liam Purcell. He pointed out that I was not speaking from the “lived experience” of disability applicants – which is a fair comment. But he did not accept that some claimants were effectively diagnosing themselves. Yet applications for a Personal Independence Payment (PIP) can be made without medical support or an interview. Assessment may be made from an application form and from answers in a telephone call.

As I wrote before, PIPs are meant to pay for the *extra* costs incurred by the disabled and are separate from eligibility for Universal Credit. The scope for PIPs has been widened to include mental and emotional issues - including anxiety and depression, which are very difficult to assess. It is surely only exceptional cases that would lead to extra costs – perhaps of transport or the help of a carer.

CAP is right to give a voice to those in need but its publicity effectively endorses attacks on the government. Most concerning to me was the suggestion that there might be a connection between the ‘Assisted Dying Bill’ (not a government bill but a private one) and welfare cuts – as though the aim is really to dispose of the disabled. CAP should not give space to extreme comments of this kind.

We now know that the meeting of a CAP delegation with the minister concerned – Stephen Timms – went very badly. CAP say that he was uninterested and unsympathetic, even rude. But they also say that they called his position shameful and told him to resign. It could be that CAP’s approach was intensely emotional and aggressive.

Look again at the government’s perspective. PIP payments have increased from 175,000 to 348,000 in only 4 years and now number 3.7 million. The cost has risen from £15 to 20 billion. Government cuts hope to peg this back to £15 billion. The average payment of £400 a month is enough to attract a flood of extra claimants. These things happen. Compare the number of children now diagnosed with ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) – a controversial label – increasingly sought after as it can bring educational advantage. It is approaching a million and the NHS has suggested that this could double. The local authority has to pay the ever-rising cost through Council Tax.

Is it not a Christian responsibility also to spare a thought for those in government who are wrestling with these dilemmas – and to keep in mind that some taxpayers are needy too?. Governments are pleased to give out money but what an outcry if some has to be taken away – just wait for the inevitable ending of the triple lock for pensioners.

We Christians are often idealists. We want to scrap armaments, to welcome all migrants; to give everyone a house and to guarantee a good income but we can't - and if we did, the consequences might not be what we would hope.

I put it to Liam that CAP was in an excellent position to suggest priorities, to advise on ways to prevent exploitation and to give the greatest support to those in the greatest need. His reply was that he didn't have time to discuss these issues.

Merryn and I have supported CAP for many years and will continue to do so. It offers invaluable practical assistance and it speaks for the poor *but...* it could be more effective if it faced up to the realities of government.

Graham

Around the Circuit

Bromyard news

In the month of July we always celebrate the anniversary of our church being built and opened (167 years ago, now), and this year we are delighted that the Rev'd Phil Miller, Vicar at St. Peter's, has accepted our invitation to lead our service on Sunday afternoon 13 July. We look forward to a special time together on this happy occasion when we thank God for the work and Faithfulness of the many who have built and continued the worship and ministry at New Road Bromyard.

We also welcome to our pulpit this July Local Preacher Wendy Werrell, who has moved to Bromyard in recent times and has joined us at New Road.
(Wendy has written an article for In Touch, which you can find on p. 10)

Ledbury News

Our Annual Church Meeting was held at the very start of June, and was a good opportunity to reflect on all that we had done over the past twelve months. This reflection procedure will continue with a Church Awayday (or – more strictly – an Away Morning!) on 1st August, when we will take time out to think in more detail about what has gone well, what not so well, and what we would like to do for the future.

One of the groups that has been struggling is the Monday Fellowship, an ecumenical meeting that came to our church when we moved to Bye Street. As mentioned in previous reports, they felt the time had come to wind down and, by the time you read this, a final time together will have happened, taking the form of a Service of Thanksgiving for all that the fellowship has been and for all that it has achieved.

Sadly, I had to cancel the planned Bible study in June – not for any lack of support, but for personal reasons. However, we look forward to a series beginning in July on The Sacraments, to be led by Rev Martyn Sanders.

The Ledbury ecumenical Pentecost service was well supported by our church – I think I counted well over 20 Methodists present, though given people were scattered around the parish church, it is difficult to be sure. (And, as an aside, it was good to know that we are not the only ones who sometimes find it hard to master an AV system! But we got there in the end!)

We wish you all a warm and gentle summer, whether you are at home or away, and pray that we all come back refreshed and excited when a new Methodist year starts in September.

Brian Hudson

St. John's

As I write, the temperature outside is rising with very warm weather predicted over the next few days. As July and August approach we, here at St John's, wish everyone a lovely summer... gently warm would be perfect!

Early in June we had the pleasure of welcoming Revd. Novette Headley to lead our morning service at Pentecost; it was indeed a privilege to hear Novette preach. It was also our church anniversary service and Tony Taylor regaled us with St. John's (sometimes surprising) history.

We now look forward to welcoming Revd. Dr. Keith Garner to lead our last Sunday morning service in June. He will be accompanied by his wife Carol. Having read Mark Jackson's article in the June issue of In Touch we look forward to a memorable morning.

In anticipation of summer the Zoom Bible study group has moved to monthly face-to-face meetings, so far at Tony and Jennifer Pitt's home. There are also a number of 'Tea in the Garden' events planned at various members' homes - a chance to get to know each other even better. (Let's hope the weather holds!)

The world is in turmoil. It is worth reminding ourselves that, when the disciples had a crisis of faith in the storm at Galilee, Jesus was there. Not on the shore but in the boat with them. Let us not forget.

We wish the folk at Ledbury and Bromyard a peaceful and meaningful summer. We'll be in touch again in September.

Pat Peden

Fairtrade Foundation calls for tea-drinkers to ‘brew

Tea-drinkers in the UK are being asked to help change the “woefully inadequate” wages and working conditions of the estate workers on tea plantations around the world.

The Fairtrade Foundation’s new ‘Brew It Fair’ campaign is based on the findings of a report which sets out just how many workers on tea plantations live in “chronic poverty”.

Much of the world’s tea is auctioned, which means that a few very large buyers end up able to dictate the prices of how much they will pay for it. This has a brutal impact on the workers: a recent survey of 260 tea-growers and pickers in Kenya found that only one in five earn enough to feed and support their families and then also send their children to school.

The report says: “As tea drinkers, we are now used to paying very little for, and putting little value on, our cup of tea.” But for the growers and pickers of tea, the “high levels of unstable work, low incomes and wages, gender discrimination and unsafe working conditions” continue.

Fairtrade calls on the UK Government to introduce a new law on human rights and environmental due diligence (HREDD). This should be “centred on the needs of farmers and workers, with a focus on supporting living incomes and living wages...”

The report also urges UK tea-drinkers to buy Fairtrade tea, highlighting the Co-op, Marks & Spencer, Sainsbury’s, and Waitrose as key supporters. The UK accounts for 61 per cent of all the Fairtrade tea sold in the world.

Bananas could be lost to climate change, Christian Aid warns

Bananas are in danger. Almost half of the world’s banana-growing regions may be lost to climate change in the next 50 years, a new report has warned.

Bananas are the world’s fourth most important food crop globally — but rising temperatures, droughts, and fungal infections are threatening where most of the world’s crops grow, in Latin America and the Caribbean.

A recent study by Christian Aid found that 80 per cent of global banana exports come from this region, but that 60 per cent of the land currently used for the crop will be unsuitable, due to climate change, by 2080.

The director of policy and campaigns at Christian Aid, Osai Ojigho, said: “Bananas are not just the world’s favourite fruit, but they are also an essential food for millions of people. We need to wake up to the danger posed by climate change to this vital crop.”

UK consumers eat more bananas than any other European country, eating on average about 85 bananas a year each.

Toby's Holiday

I went for a holiday to the sea; I loved sniffing the new smells in the sand dunes and trying to catch rabbits. I had a comfy bed and plenty to eat, but it was not like home; when we came back I was so happy to be back in my old house with my old bed and all the things I knew and loved. I thanked God for holidays, but thank you for coming home again.

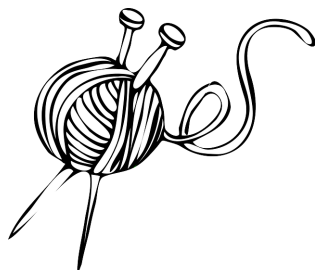
Woof woof!

Toby



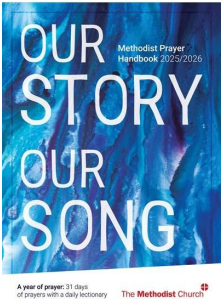
Any spare knitting wool?

Annie (at St. John's) is busy knitting hats to go in shoeboxes - she is well on her way to her target of 100 this year! Not surprisingly, she is running out of wool again, so if you have any spare wool (DK or similar) please can she have some. If you don't see Annie you can leave the wool with one of the stewards. Thank you!



Methodist Prayer Handbook

Don't forget to see your church rep to order your copy of the 2025-26 Methodist Prayer Handbook. It costs £4-15, and orders must be with them by the end of July at the very latest. (And in case you've forgotten, the person to speak to is Rosi Taylor for St Johns, Jane Morriss for Bromyard and Brian Hudson for Ledbury.)



Reflection from Jerusalem

For those of you who don't see the Good Morning Church emails I include this reflection from David Hardman, the Methodist Liaison Officer in Jerusalem, sent on Friday 13th June:

In October 2023, the sirens were a surprise. I barely had time to react before hearing missiles intercepted overhead, shrapnel raining down nearby. Now, in June 2025, it's different. My phone woke me with alerts—Israel had launched 'pre-emptive strikes' against Iran.

Warnings to stay close to a shelter and to move the moment a siren sounded. This morning news apps reported Iran's retaliation, drones already in the air. I brace for the sirens, for the inevitable rush to shelter.

How do I feel? Angry. Angry at world leaders who still believe peace can be forged through war. Governments that pour endless resources into military build-up while refusing to invest in the very things that sustain peace—education, dialogue, cooperation.

I am angry at the church, too, for legitimizing war through 'Just War' theory instead of offering a real vision for peace—one rooted in justice, reconciliation, and nonviolence.

For nearly two years, I have served as the Methodist Liaison Officer. I have walked where Jesus walked, lived under occupation as He did, and seen first-hand how oppression crushes lives.

And I am more certain than ever—peace will never come through force. It must be built through justice and a relentless, nonviolent struggle. **Please pray.**

A Prayer

Gracious God,

We lift before you all those directly impacted by this escalation.

We ask your blessing on the peacebuilders.

Strengthen, we pray our resolve to be people of Your peace.

Lord in your mercy

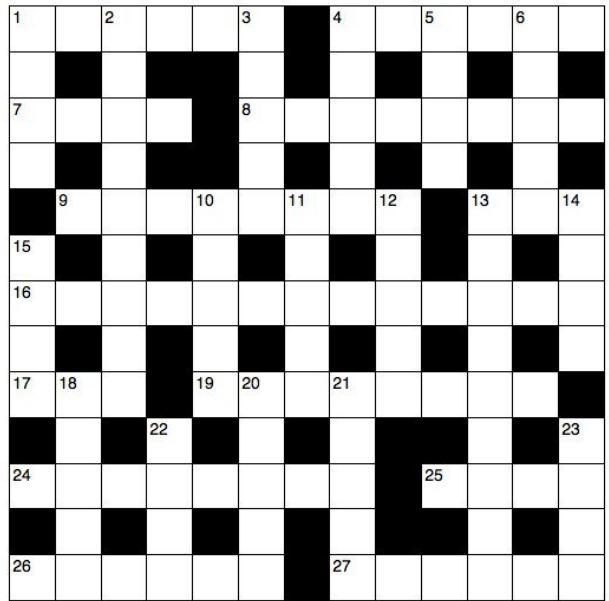
Hear our prayer

Amen

Crossword

Across

- 1 'I pray that out of his glorious — he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being' (Ephesians 3:16) (6)
- 4 'Saul's father Kish and — father Ner were sons of Abiel' (1 Samuel 14:51) (6)
- 7 'Praise the Lord, O my — ' (Psalm 103:1) (4)
- 8 See 5 Down
- 9 Laws (1 Kings 11:33) (8)
- 13 'Who of you by worrying can — a single hour to his life?' (Luke 12:25) (3)
- 16 Artistry (Exodus 31:5) (13)
- 17 'Your young men will see visions, your — men will dream dreams' (Acts 2:17) (3)
- 19 How David described his Lord (Psalm 19:14) (8)
- 24 'If this city is built and its — — restored, you will be left with nothing in Trans-Euphrates' (Ezra 4:16) (5,3)
- 25 'The holy Scriptures, which are able to make you — for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus' (2 Timothy 3:15) (4)
- 26 Intended destination of arrows (Lamentations 3:12) (6)
- 27 Eve hit (anag.) (6)



Down

- 1 'For I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find — for your souls' (Matthew 11:29) (4)
- 2 Where Peter was when he denied Christ three times (Luke 22:55) (9)
- 3 Remarkable early 20th-century Indian evangelist, a convert from Hinduism, — Sundar Singh (5)
- 4 'Now the king had put the officer on whose — — leaned in charge of the gate' (2 Kings 7:17) (3,2)
- 5 and 8 Across The Lover describes this facial feature of the Beloved thus: 'Your — is like the tower of Lebanon looking towards — ' (Song of Songs 7:4) (4,8)
- 6 'Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled — your waist' (Ephesians 6:14) (5)
- 10 Trout (anag.) (5)
- 11 Easily frightened (1 Thessalonians 5:14) (5)
- 12 The ability to perceive (Ecclesiastes 10:3) (5)
- 13 One of the clans descended from Benjamin (Numbers 26:38) (9)
- 14 "It is one of the Twelve," he replied, "one who — bread into the bowl with me" (Mark 14:20) (4)

- 15 Resound (Zephaniah 2:14) (4)
- 18 Traditional seat of the Dalai Lama (5)
- 20 Precise (John 4:53) (5)
- 21 Build (Ezekiel 4:2) (5)
- 22 Beat harshly (Acts 22:25) (4)
- 23 Darius, who succeeded Belshazzar as king of the Babylonians, was one (Daniel 5:31) (4)

Tea in the Garden

We have four dates arranged so far:

Saturday 12th July, 3 - 5pm

at Tony and Jennifer Pitt's home - in support of 'Mind'

Saturday 19th July, 3 - 5pm

at Ann and John Oldman's home

Saturday 2nd August, 3 - 5pm

at Pat and Roy Little's home

Saturday 9th August, 3 - 5pm

at Val Brown's home

All welcome! Speak to the hosts if you don't already know their address. If anyone else would like to host a 'Tea in the Garden' event, please speak to Brenda Drake.

Not too late...

..to sponsor Tony Pitt as he walks a half-marathon in aid of the Alzheimer's Society on Saturday 5th July.

If you would like to support him with a donation to this good cause, please get in touch with him, or follow the link below to his JustGiving page at

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/TonyPitt-Trek26>.



My Garden in June

June is such a lovely month in our gardens and parks. Trees and shrubs are in their luscious leaf; roses are everywhere sometimes with a glorious scent; in the vegetable garden we have fresh lettuce and maybe tomatoes coming on. It really is the most loveliest time.

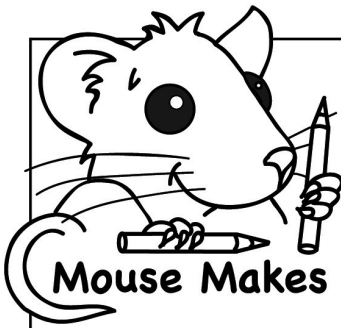
As a newcomer to Bromyard in the dead of winter, with my lovely house I inherited two substantial gardens, front and back, along with ponds, front and back. My nephew said 'Ooh look, you've got hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of tadpoles!' Hang on a minute, doesn't that mean there'll be hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of frogs...? Frogs aside, it has been the most wonderful spring this year, waiting to see what was going to come through. First of all were the Hellebores at Christmas, even before snowdrops and crocuses and then daffodils. Stunning yellow striped with red tulips were next, peonies are coming and Irises and lilies in the ponds. The garden seems to be reflecting the warm welcome I've received in Bromyard from so many people.

Of course the thing that everyone knows about gardens is that it takes a lot of work. As Kipling says, "Our England is a garden and such gardens are not made by singing 'O how beautiful' and sitting in the shade". In my case the work has involved a team of three chaps in hi-viz and protective helmets who basically blitz their way through the garden. Hedges lowered and trimmed, huge overgrowth cleared, beds dug, fences mended and many surprises unearthed. I can now see the lovely shapes that are there and appreciate the planning that went in by previous owners to make such beauty. And perhaps we can agree with Mrs Dorothy Francis Gurney who said 'One is nearer God's heart in a garden than anywhere else on Earth'.

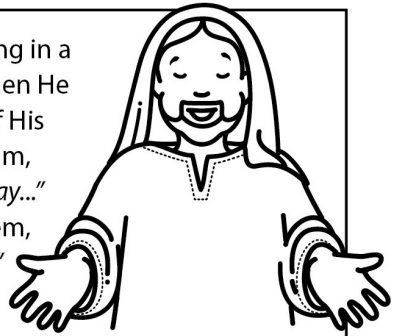
Although that reminds me of that old,old joke of a visitor to a garden who was in raptures over the beauty that God had created until the gardener said 'Ay and you should have seen it when he had it all to 'imself!'.

May you have many happy hours in this summertime in a garden. Now about those frogs....

Wendy Werrell



"Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray..." And He said to them, "When you pray, say...."



Our _____
 in _____,
 hallowed be your
 _____, your
 _____ come,
 your _____ be done,
 on _____ as it is in
 _____.
 Give us today our daily
 _____.
 _____ us our
 S _____ as we forgive
 those who sin against us.
 Lead us not into

 but _____
 us from _____.
 For the kingdom,
 the _____ and
 the _____ are
 yours now and forever.
 Amen

D	T	E	O	P	R	G	O	D
F	E	E	B	R	E	A	D	I
O	M	G	T	O	P	P	G	S
R	P	W	R	T	E	O	L	C
G	T	L	E	E	N	W	O	I
I	A	O	S	C	T	E	R	P
V	T	R	P	T	A	R	Y	L
E	I	D	A	I	N	A	M	E
N	O	S	S	O	C	D	A	S
E	N	P	S	N	E	V	F	W
S	K	P	E	V	I	L	A	I
S	I	R	S	I	N	S	T	L
Y	N	A	E	A	R	T	H	L
G	Y	H	E	A	V	E	N	
I	D	E	L	I	V	E	R	E
F	O	R	G	I	V	E	V	E
A	M	E	N	W	O	R	L	D
I	L	F	L	J	E	S	U	S



Fill in the missing words of the Lord's Prayer then find them and these extra words in the word search:

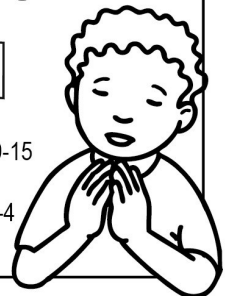
LORD'S PRAYER
DISCIPLES
JESUS
GOD
WORLD
NEEDS
FORGIVENESS
TRESPASSES
PROTECTION
REPENTANCE



Read
 Matthew 6:9-15
 and
 Luke 11:1-4



The versions of **The Lord's Prayer** we say today come from the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.
 Which version do you use in your church?



Women's Breakfast Fellowship

We meet at Ledbury Methodist Church on the first Saturday of the month from 9am – 10.30am. Women come from churches in our circuit and from other churches in the area. Breakfast is a simple meal and conversation flows over the coffee and croissants. We then settle into a time of Bible study, sharing a passage together before having some discussion questions. In our June meeting, we considered Pentecost and the birthday of the Church. We shared stories of baptism and confirmation before going deeper and considering times in our lives when we have been transformed.

Caroline and I started this group because we both wanted a bit more fellowship, encouragement and challenge. It's made a difference to my Christian journey already – sometimes it's sharing a story or being inspired by someone else's story. Sometimes it's hearing about struggle or frustration and knowing that we can support each other. There is a lot of laughter! There are all ages. There are tears sometimes. There is acceptance and fun!

All women are welcome to come. It's not a 'commit to every week' kind of group – come when you can if you feel like it.

In July our theme will be, 'For everything there is a Season' and then we'll take a break in August.

We have booked an 'Away Day' on September 27th. Details of how to book are in the previous In Touch magazine – but do just get in touch with Caroline if you'd like to know more. Cost is £25 for the day and that includes lunch, refreshments and transport if you need it.

Margaret Kunzer

To change or not to change

People seem to be changing their minds a lot these days, politicians especially. President Trump's little games with tariffs have thrown the world's markets into turmoil, and our own government has done its famous U-turn on winter fuel payments. People have found it hard to plan for the future. Businesses hate uncertainty, so do stock markets, and so do we when our own plans have to be re-thought. Changing your mind is a bad thing, right? Well, not necessarily, of course. There are plenty of occasions when this can be a positive thing. Often a

re-think results in a change of direction which opens up new possibilities, opportunities we had not considered.

Even God has been known to change his mind. In Exodus ch 32, God was furious with the children of Israel when they turned to worshipping the Golden calf they had made. He was minded to destroy them. But Moses pleaded with Him and He changed his mind.

Becoming a Christian is a huge change for someone who has found God. This is a joyful, emotional experience, but it takes a lot to turn your life around, to accept new priorities and face a radically new direction. But that is when we learn what it is to have a wonderful, powerful new friend in Jesus who will always be there for us, supporting us in our new life, and who will not change his mind about us no matter what we have done or what mistakes we make. And it's the same for those of us who have known God for a while. The Christian life is packed with change, the same as everybody else's, but for a Christian, life's changes teach us more about God all the time, which is why when bad things happen, we can grab hold of His hand and know that He will pull us through. It takes faith and courage, and prayer to keep in touch, but the result is a life worth living whatever our circumstances are. So, yes, we can be affected by what happens when people change their minds and sometimes this is inconvenient or worse, but if we are prepared to make that U-turn to God then that is one change which we will never suffer from or regret.

Chris Knight

Christian Aid 2025 totals for St Johns

Thank you to everyone who has contributed in any way to Christian Aid funds this year. Your caring and generosity are much appreciated. The amounts raised at St John's are as follows:



Christian Aid Week Church collection	645.00
Coffee mornings	233.48
Lent lunches	507.70
House to house collections	<u>243.76</u>
	<u>£1,629.94</u>

Wordsearch

If you ever struggle with doubt, take heart: so did one of the apostles, whose Feast Day is this month. St Thomas just could NOT believe that the Jesus he had seen crucified and dead on the cross could ever come back to life. But Thomas was an honest sceptic, because he really wanted to know the truth. Jesus could help such a man. And so He appeared to him and the other disciples. Instead of scolding him, Jesus simply showed him the wounds. Thomas's response was immediate: "My Lord and my God" (John 20.26ff). Ancient legends tell how Thomas went on to India as a missionary. There are rumours that Thomas even built a palace for a king's daughter in India, and thus he is the patron saint of architects. It is believed that he was martyred by a spear on 3rd July, 72 AD in Mylapore, near Madras. 46 ancient churches in England are dedicated to him.

Thomas	Appeared
Doubt	India
Apostle	Patron
Cross	Martyred
Dead	Spear
Truth	Mylapore
Sceptic	Missionary
Wounds	Showed
Lord	Saint
God	madras

T	N	I	A	S	I	N	D	I	A	D
D	M	I	S	S	I	O	N	A	R	Y
D	A	O	M	Y	L	A	P	O	R	E
O	R	E	T	R	A	P	W	E	O	I
C	T	O	D	R	E	O	D	C	T	S
N	Y	D	L	A	U	S	I	P	B	R
A	R	T	R	N	A	T	S	A	U	A
R	E	E	D	M	P	L	H	T	O	E
O	D	S	O	E	D	E	G	R	D	P
R	E	H	C	P	D	E	W	O	H	S
W	T	S	A	R	D	A	M	N	D	O



"It's not a new stained-glass window – the Youth Club put its skateboard ramp too close to the church's west wall!"

- ACROSS:** 1, Riches. 4, Abner's. 7, Soul. 8, Damascus. 9, Statutes. 13, Add. 16, Craftsmanship. 17, Old. 19, Redeemer. 24, Walls are. 25, Wise. 26, Target. 27, Thief.
- DOWN:** 1, Rest. 2, Courtyard. 3, Sadhu. 4, Arm he. 5, Nose. 6, Round. 10, Tutor. 11, Timid. 12, Sense. 13, Ashbelite. 14, Dips. 15, Echo. 18, Lhasa. 20, Exact. 21, Erect. 22, Flog. 23, Mede.

Pentecost

June is the month of Pentecost. A new church season begins in which we focus on the work of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2: 1-13 [ESV]

When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. ²And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. ⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

⁵Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. ⁶And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. ⁷And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?" ⁸And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? ⁹Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, ¹¹both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God." ¹²And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" ¹³But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine."

What comes to your mind when you hear the word 'Pentecost'?

The Day of Pentecost is the Christian festival of the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples. At Pentecost God fulfilled Jesus' promise to send the Holy Spirit.

Do you think of Pentecost as a harvest thanksgiving festival?

Pentecost was a Hebrew harvest thanksgiving festival of first fruits. You can read about it in Leviticus 23: 9-22. The Christian Pentecost is similarly a celebration of first fruits, the first fruits of the Spirit working within and through the apostles. What do you think a Spirit-filled life looks like?

Pentecost is a call to mission. Filled with the Holy Spirit, once ignorant fishermen, who hid behind locked doors for fear of the authorities finding out they were followers of Jesus, were able to stand up in public and proclaim the good news of Jesus – and in many different languages. They were ridiculed. “They must be drunk!” people said. But they weren’t, they were simply revealing the first fruits of the of the harvest. Thousands were won over to Christ. This act of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost underlines the multi-lingual, multi-cultural, multi-racial and multi-national nature of Christ’s kingdom.

Filled and gifted by the Spirit, the apostles went on to build the church, or more correctly the Holy Spirit went on to build the church using the apostles. They were gifted courage and determination and went to the ends of the earth, facing all kinds of dangers, despite having been a timid little group huddled together in an upper room just fifty days before. They had begun as followers of Jesus, then became disciples, and were now apostles - people sent out, to continue Christ’s ministry and mission in the world. As God’s faithful people, we too are filled with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit gives us power and transforms us into something beautiful for God, equipping us for service in God’s Kingdom - all for God’s glory and the welfare of his people.

* Where do you see the Holy Spirit working today?

* How does the Holy Spirit work in you today?

Pray:

Loving God, thank you that the fire of your Spirit burns within me. Grant me a Spirit-inspired attitude, Spirit-powered words, and Spirit-gifted actions. May your Holy Spirit bring strength, courage and peace to all who live with fears and anxieties helping them rise above the challenges of earthly life. Thank you for the Holy Spirit equipping the church to be effective in its witness to your love. In the name and in the Spirit of Jesus we pray. *Amen.*

Martyn Sanders

*(Yes, I know June and Pentecost have passed, but this is too good to leave out!
Rosi)*

It's Always Pride



Staring at beautiful objects really does spark inspiration

Next time you see something beautiful – pause for a moment and simply enjoy it. Especially if it counts as ‘art’.

For recent research has found that contemplating beautiful works of art really can inspire you.

Researchers at the University of Cambridge have found that beautiful art can induce ‘psychological distancing’. This is the process of zooming out on your thoughts, in order to gain better clarity on your life.

One professor at Cambridge put it this way: “Many philosophers throughout history have suggested that engaging with aesthetic beauty invokes a special kind of psychological state.”

So, visiting an art museum “is not just a pleasant way to spend an afternoon, it may actually change how we think about our lives.” Beauty appreciation seems to “help people detach from their immediate practical concerns and adopt a broader, more abstract perspective.”

“Admiring the beauty of art may be the ideal way to trigger the abstract cognitive processes increasingly lost in a world of screens and smartphones.”

Researchers say this shows the importance of public art venues. The findings were published in the journal *Empirical Studies of the Arts*.

Lectionary Readings

6 July

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

2 Kings 5:1-14

Psalm 30 Galatians 6:(1-6) 7-16

Luke 10:1-11, 16-20

13 July

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Amos 7:7-17

Psalm 82

Colossians 1:1-14

Luke 10:25-37

20 July

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Amos 8:1-12

Psalm 52

Colossians 1:15-28

Luke 10:38-42

27 July

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary

Time Hosea 1:2-10

Psalm 85

Colossians 2:6-15 (16-19)

Luke 11:1-13

3 August

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Hosea 11:1-11

Psalm 107:1-9, 43

Colossians 3:1-11

Luke 12:13-21

10 August

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary

Time Isaiah 1:1, 10-20

Psalm 50:1-8, 22-23

Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16

Luke 12:32-40

17 August

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isaiah 5:1-7

Psalm 80:1-2, 8-19

Hebrews 11:29 – 12:2

Luke 12:49-56

24 August

Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary

Time Jeremiah 1:4-10

Psalm 71:1-6

Hebrews 12:18-29

Luke 13:10-17

31 August

Twenty-second in Ordinary Time

Jeremiah 2:4-13

Psalm 81:1, 10-16

Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16

Luke 14:1, 7-14

7 September

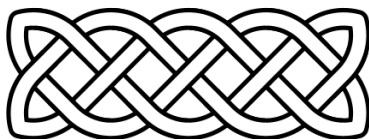
Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary

Time Jeremiah 18:1-11

Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18

Philemon 1-21

Luke 14:25-33

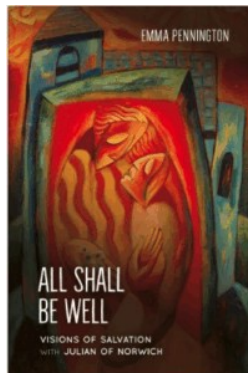


Book Reviews

All Shall Be Well: Visions of Salvation with Julian of Norwich By Emmy Pennington, BRF, £12.99

How can all be well in the world in which we live? What does 'All shall be well' mean when all is *not* well? Through revelations 10 to 16 of her *Revelations of Divine Love*, Julian of Norwich returns time and again to the idea that 'all is well'. In her latest book Emma Pennington examines this popular mantra and explores what Julian really means by it, bringing depth and relevance to these words for the reader who lives in an age of pandemic, war and climate crisis which closely echoes Julian's own.

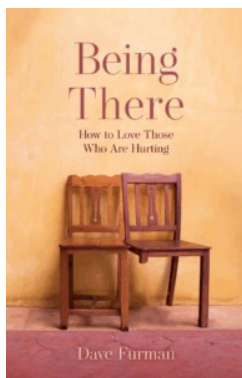
Through deep engagement with Julian's visions, we are encouraged to reflect in prayer and devotion on our own personal relationship with God.



Being There – how to love those who are hurting By Dave Furman, 10Publishing, £7.99

Everyone has friends or family who suffer from sickness, disability, depression, or the death of a loved one. But often, while we want to help them, we are also struggling in our own various ways.

Writing from the perspective of one who needs extra help on a daily basis, Dave Furman offers insight into the support that people need when helping others. Furman draws on his own life experiences, examples from the Bible, and wisdom from Christians throughout history. Deeply pastoral, this book points you to the strength that only God can provide as you care for those who are hurting.



Life choice

A small boy returned from Sunday School in tears. When questioned by his mother for the reason of his distress, he gulped: "Jesus wants me for a sunbeam, but I want to be an engine driver."

Baptism

The vicar announced that an additional font would soon be placed in the church, so that babies could be baptised at both ends.

Church Services in July

Sunday 6th July *Ordinary 14*

Bromyard	10.30am	Rev. Phil Warrey	<i>Holy Communion</i>
Ledbury	10.30am	Rev. Kath Baldwin	<i>Holy Communion</i>
	2.30pm	Rev. Phil Warrey	<i>Relaxed</i>
St John's	10.30am	Rev. Roy Crew	<i>Holy Communion</i>

Sunday 13th July *Ordinary 15*

Bromyard	2.30pm	Rev. Phil Miller	<i>Chapel Anniversary</i>
Ledbury	10.30am	Gillian and Stephen Chowns	
	6.00pm	Rev. Phil Warrey	<i>Iona-style</i>
St John's	10.30am	Rev. Phil Warrey	

Sunday 20th July *Ordinary 16*

Bromyard	10.30am	Mrs. Wendy Werrell	
Ledbury	10.30am	Rev. Phil Warrey	
St John's	10.30am	Mr. Keith White	
	4.00pm	Rev. Phil Warrey	<i>Tea Church</i>

Sunday 27th July *Ordinary 17*

Bromyard	2.30pm	Mr. Chris Knight	<i>Tea Church</i>
Ledbury	10.30am	Rev. Martyn Sanders	<i>All-Age Worship</i>
St John's	10.30am	Rev. Phil Warrey	<i>Holy Communion</i>

Church Services in August

Sunday 3rd August *Ordinary 18*

Bromyard	10.30am	Rev. Kath Baldwin	<i>Holy Communion</i>
Ledbury	10.30am	Rev. Jayne Webb	<i>Chapel Anniversary</i>
	2.30pm	Rev. Mary Jolly	<i>Relaxed</i>
St John's	10.30am	Mrs. Wendy Werrell	

Sunday 10th August *Ordinary 19*

Bromyard	2.30pm	Mrs. Linda Williams	
Ledbury	10.30am	Rev. Nigel Williams	<i>Holy Communion</i>
	6.00pm	Rev. Martyn Sanders	<i>Iona-style</i>
St John's	10.30am	Rev. Phil Warrey	

Sunday 17th August		<i>Ordinary 20</i>	
Bromyard	10.30am	Mr. Tony Pitt	
Ledbury	10.30am	Revd. Martyn Sanders	
St John's	10.30am	Ms. Lisa-Jayne Lewis	
	4.00pm	Tony & Rosi Taylor	<i>Tea Church</i>

Deadline for September 'In Touch'

Sunday 24th August		<i>Ordinary 21</i>	
Bromyard	2.30pm	Revd. Ruth Eldridge	<i>Tea Church</i>
Ledbury	10.30am	Mrs. Linda Williams	<i>All-Age Worship</i>
St John's	10.30am	Revd. Nigel Williams	<i>Holy Communion</i>

Sunday 31st August		<i>Ordinary 22</i>	
Bromyard	2.30pm	Revd. Roy Crew	<i>Holy Communion</i>
Ledbury	10.30am	Mr. Keith White	
St John's	10.30am	Revd. Phil Warrey	

Zoom Bible Study

The group enjoyed another ‘face-to-face’ session recently and look forward to meeting again on Friday 18th July, again at the Pitts’ (and again at 2.30pm). The meeting in August will be at 2.30pm on Friday 15th August.

From September 17th meetings will resume by Zoom, fortnightly on Wednesdays at 7.00pm.



Tea Church

at St. John's

4.00pm on the 3rd Sunday

20th July

17th August

Diary Dates in July & August

Saturday 5th July

9am - 10.30am Women's Breakfast Fellowship (LMC)

Monday 7th July

2pm Free Film Afternoon (LMC)

Thursday 17th July

2.30pm River House Group meets at St. John's

3.00pm Alpha House Group meets at the Rose Garden

Friday 18th July

2.30pm Bible study group meet, *chez* Pitt

Keeping InTouch

Circuit contacts:

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Rest day: Usually Friday

Circuit Website: www.herefordshiremethodists.org.uk

Circuit Administrator: admin@herefordshiremethodists.org.uk

The deadline for the June edition of In Touch is **Sunday 17th August**; ideally, please send material by email to hfdscircuitnews@gmail.com

Or by Post to 18 Southbank Close, HEREFORD HR1 2TQ

