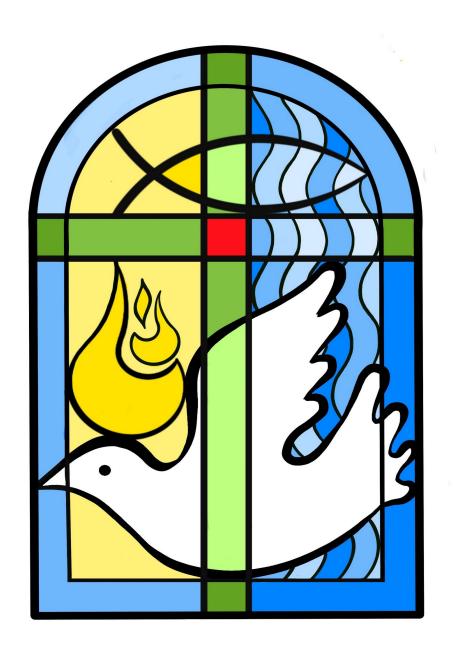


# **Borders Mission Circuit**

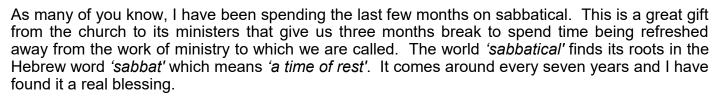


# Summer Edition 2024



# Supers Sabbatical Scribblings

Greetings from sabbatical land!



So, what have I been up to?

My time away began on the 1<sup>st</sup> April and after a few days sorting things out, I spent a time in retreat at Ampleforth Abbey in Yorkshire. This is a Benedictine Monastery that was formed during the time of the Reformation when it became possible for Catholic churches to be formed again

after the dissolution of the monasteries and churches during the reign of Henry VIII. Currently, there is a group of around 20 monks who have their home at Ampleforth and they follow the Rule of St Benedict which governs their whole life. One of the rules of the Order is the requirement on them to provide hospitality to travellers and visitors. This is where I slotted into the life of the Abbey.

I was welcomed as a visitor to the Abbey to spend a few days just taking space to reconnect with my own continuing spiritual journey. One of the greatest joys I had whilst I was there, was to be able to

share in all the offices of the day. This began with Matins which started at 6.00am in the morning. The service was good, but getting up at 5.00am was quite a shock to the system!! The day continued with Lauds at 7.30am, Mass at 9.00am, Sext at 1.00pm, Vespers at 6.00pm and ending with Compline at 8.15pm. A full day, but a real experience to spend your day being governed by the Offices – waiting for the bell to toll to call you to service. Spending the rest of the time with an

opportunity to delve into some reading and reflecting on life and the future, was a great privilege – putting aside the day to day issues of the Circuit and just to be with God. It was a good start to my time off.

After the stay at Ampleforth, I was able to spend time rekindling my joy of photography. Having started to do this on my last sabbatical I decided to take the time developing some of the technical aspects of using the camera and so had a few lessons with a great professional photography who imparted some of his vast knowledge and experience of taking pictures. A mix of learning technical skills and getting out in the field to practise those new found techniques was a real gift.

This year's Superintendents Conference was in Oxford and was a great opportunity to meet up with other Supers from around the Connexion and find out the latest news about what's happening across the wider Methodist Church. A bit like work, but also a time of fellowship.

Still to come before I return to Circuit at the end of June is an time on retreat at Scargill House in the Yorkshire Dales – getting ready for the return to work – a time of reflection, refreshing and renewal.

The objective that I set for my sabbatical was to refresh my spiritual life and look to prepare materials. These I hope to use on my return as we strive to build the spiritual life of the Circuit and churches and move forward in developing the ministry to which we are all called to share in the Borders Mission Circuit. Over the coming months I look forward to sharing with you my experiences and hopefully, be able to allow God to speak through me and encourage you to, perhaps, seek a new insight of God working in your life.

Take care,

Rev Robert.

# News From Around The Circuit.

#### Alfreton Wesley.

Rain, sleet, ice, fog... Whatever the weather, nothing can stop members of Alfreton Wesley Church attending Sunday worship.

Well, that's not quite correct...

The worst snowfall of last winter happened during a Saturday night in December. It halved the annual Christmas tree festival from a two-day to a one-day event, and cancelled Sunday service and viewing time.

But it came as a bonus - enabling the decorated trees to remain right through until Christmas, and allowing them to provide an enchanted setting for the annual carol service.

The festival had the title "Once Upon A Time," with each of the 20 trees decorated on the theme of a children's book.



Trees ranged from "The Chronicles of Narnia" to "Treasure Island" and from "Alice in Wonderland" to "Around the World in 80 Days," complete with hot-air balloon - not to mention "Moses and the burning bush".



"The Snowman" and "101 Dalmatians" also attracted lots of admiring glances.



Centre of attention was a ten-foot tree in the middle of the worship area based on "The Railway Children," with flags, whistles and tickets providing decorations and a model railway train chugging round the tree.



The previous year's festival took Christmas hymns and songs as its theme, but organisers wanted something different for the next event, and members and friends came up with most inventive ideas and put in a lot of hard work.

The next big event in the church's calendar was the 41st anniversary of the church being opened in Ellesmere Avenue, and members recognised it with music when they organized a weekend of celebrations.

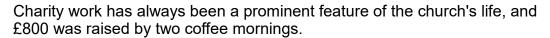


The town's male voice choir presented a Saturday-afternoon programme of music and mirth, and local preacher Martin Sykes of Nottingham accompanied hymn singing on his guitar (pictured) when he led worship the following morning. Organist was Stephen Wall.

The church, which was opened in 1983 by the two oldest women members, was the third Methodist church to be sited in the town.

During the demolition of a previous church, a time capsule was discovered, containing documents, coins and newspaper cuttungs. The capsule has now been buried in the grounds of the present church.

Church members put on their thinking caps to compete in a closely-fought maths competition, which was won by Jackie McNeill. She was presented with her prize (pictured) by Caroline Dellow, who devised the guiz.







Derbyshire Blood Bikes and The Mission Aviation Fellowship, which provides a flying rescue service to stranded victims unable to be reached by land, each received £400.

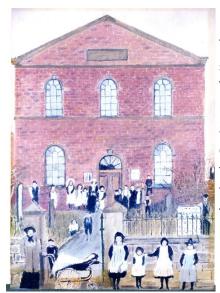
Blood Bikes volunteer Martin North took his bike along to one of the events and Maureen Garrett, who first suggested the charity as one of the beneficiaries, is pictured climbing aboard watched by other church members.

#### Clay Cross.

#### 200 years of Methodism!

During 2024 we will be celebrating 200 years of Methodism in Clay Cross. Plans for these celebrations are still ongoing so watch out for future notices. One thing that is clear is the preparation of a celebratory banner that our craft group is busy producing.

In 1824 Clay Cross was very small but a Methodist New Connexion chapel, the first church in the village, was built on the site now occupied by Central. Although at the time there was very little prospect of any growth in population of the area a Primitive Methodist Class was established in 1832; but this ceased to exist by 1837. Everything changed, however, when in 1836 the North Midland Railway was constructed which required the digging of a tunnel under the village and the consequent discovery of excellent coal seams. The tunnel excavation and subsequent sinking of coal mines required the very rapid expansion of the population, and the various branches of the Methodist Church took the opportunity of evangelism this provided.



Clay Cross New Connexion Church built 1848 to replace original 1824 building

The structure and history of the English Methodist Church can be seen in microcosm in Clay Cross with the five main branches, Wesleyan, New Connexion, Primitive, Free and Bible Christians, having churches within the town during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The various amalgamations of these connexions are reflected in the unions of churches within Clay Cross. At the time of Methodist Union in 1932 there were still four churches present in the town, but this reduced to three with the Primitive Connexion church building being closed. The final amalgamation of the three remaining buildings did not take place until 1964 with the decision to retain the site of the original 1824 church.

#### Other news

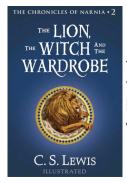
#### 12<sup>th</sup> Night Service

It seems a long time ago, but a very uplifting 12<sup>th</sup> Night Service was again held on 6<sup>th</sup> January, we were very pleased to have Connie Cann to preach. It was lovely to welcome a number of people from around the circuit and everyone said what a joy it was to round off Christmas celebrations in this manner. It is our intention to hold such a service again in 2025, so please make a note in your diaries (6<sup>th</sup> January 2025); everyone will be most welcome.

#### Bible Study

We continue to hold our bible study once a month. We have just completed a series looking at the Christian response, based on biblical teaching, to issues raised by the film about Stephen Hawking, *The Theory of Everything*. Some very difficult subjects were tackled but we had very good and fruitful discussions. We were not afraid to tackle some of the fundamental questions of living a Christian life in a secular world.





Hopefully our next series will be a little easier as it is *Not a Tame Lion*, looking at the book and film by C S Lewis '*The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe*'. Although this is a children's book it does again raise some very difficult subjects that cannot be avoided; no doubt we will get into some of the other works by C S Lewis on the way.

This bible study is not limited to Clay Cross members so if anyone is interested in joining us please do so. It is the third Tuesday of every month at 2.00pm.

#### Themed Preaching

We experimented with a series of four weeks of themed preaching during Lent. In preparation for an introduction to our next Bible Study series that dealt with some of the issues raised by C S Lewis in *The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe*. This was very well received by Church members with a request that it be repeated in the future; who said Clay Cross was not open to change! Plans are under way to do this at the end of June. We are fortunate to have an enthusiastic and committed Minister, Local Preachers and Worship Leaders as this makes it easier to plan such a series; there is great benefit in being able to sit in the congregation and pick up points raised by preachers in previous weeks and develop a theme.

This continuity in preaching and worship persisted into Palm Sunday and Holy Week with a meditative service on the Monday, a reflective Good Friday and Celebratory Easter.

#### Community Garden

Plans for the future of the Community Garden are being progressed, one option being discussed is a space of calm and rest for the whole community. This area fell into disrepair during Covid but is starting to be used again. It is hoped that some of our celebratory events mentioned above will take place in the garden whilst the long-term vision is developed.

#### South Wingfield Zion.

Greetings from South Wingfield Zion.

We are a small community with a big heart, worshiping and praising God each Sunday. We had a very moving 'Good Friday' service and thank Rev. Robert for arranging it.

We have a Ladies' Fellowship on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month, where ladies from the Anglican Church join us. It is an informal 'meeting', with invited guests, and a cup of tea and biscuit at the end.

We hold a Bible Study once a month and also an afternoon of 'Tea and Cake' normally the first Thursday, advert will be sent out.

We also have a small singing group who perform at our festival services, if you like to sing and would like to join us please contact our Musical Director Eileen Turner.

We would love to see you so please come and join us........

# The Teacup Story.

There was a couple who liked antiques and pottery and especially teacups. It was their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary and so they decided to visit an antique shop. In it they saw a beautiful cup and asked the owner if they could see it more closely. As the lady handed it to them, suddenly the cup spoke. "You don't understand," it said. "I haven't always been a teacup. There was a time when I was red and I was clay. My master took me and rolled me and patted me over and over and I yelled out, 'let me alone,' but he only smiled, 'Not yet.' "Then I was placed on a spinning



wheel and suddenly I was spun around and around and around. Stop it! I'm getting dizzy! I screamed". But the master only nodded and said, 'Not yet.' "Then he put me in the oven." I never felt such heat!" the teacup said. "I wondered why he wanted to burn me, and I yelled and knocked at the door. I could see him through the opening and I could read his lips as He shook his head, 'Not yet.' "Finally the door opened, he put me on the shelf, and I began to cool. 'There, that's better,' I said. Then he brushed and painted me all over. The fumes were horrible. I thought I would gag. 'Stop it, stop it!' I cried. He only nodded, 'Not yet.' "Then suddenly he put me back into the oven, not like the first one. This was twice as hot and I knew I would suffocate. I begged. I pleaded. I screamed. I cried. All the time I could see him through the opening, nodding his head saying, 'Not yet.' "Then I knew there wasn't any hope. I would never make it. I was ready to give up. But the door opened and he took me out and placed me on the shelf. One hour later he handed me a mirror and said, 'Look at yourself.' And I did. said. 'That's not me: that couldn't be me. It's beautiful. I'm beautiful.' "'I want you to remember. then,' he said, 'I know it hurts to be rolled and patted, but if I had left you alone, you'd have dried up. I know it made you dizzy to spin around on the wheel, but if I had stopped, you would have crumbled. I knew it hurt and was hot and disagreeable in the oven, but if I hadn't put you there, you would have cracked. I know the fumes were bad when I brushed and painted you all over, but if I hadn't done that, you never would have hardened; you would not have had any colour in your life. And if I hadn't put you back in that second oven, you wouldn't survive for very long because the hardness would not have held. Now you are a finished product. You are what I had in mind when I first began with you." ~ Author Unknown

#### Swanwick.

# Swanwick Luncheon Club



At Swanwick Methodist Church we have a very popular Luncheon Club.

It began way back in October 2008, when we saw the need as a number of our elderly Church members were on their own. So we began as a friendly group, to trial the idea for six months and see how we would get on. Our aim was to provide a meal, friendship and fellowship to people over the age of seventy. Sixteen and a half years later we are still going strong!

We have now expanded and are able to provide Christian friendship and support to other people from the village, and also bring in people from the surrounding villages. We have members from Swanwick, Somercotes, Riddings, Leabrook's, and Alfreton. Members who need transport are brought in by volunteer drivers,

The Club meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month, except August, between 11am and 2pm. It provides morning coffee, a social time for members and a two course home cooked hot mid -day meal. After lunch we have a Christian reflection, share news, and a monthly raffle.

The Luncheon Club also has an annual outing in the summer. We celebrate all the Christian festivals with the highlight being Christmas, and our Christmas dinner. We also enjoy themed lunches and special occasion meals such as King Charles' Coronation lunch.

Presently the Club caters for forty members and is run by volunteers. All of our members are 70+ years, and we have nine members who are ninety years or more! I'm delighted to say that some of our original members are still enjoying being members! For many of our members, old

or new, the Luncheon Club is the highlight of their

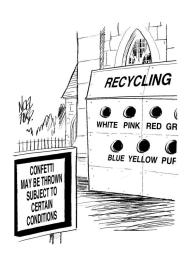
social calendar.

We are a flourishing group, accepting church members and non-church members alike, thus providing even greater outreach within the community. If your church is looking towards outreach, and willing to accept a challenge, then do consider starting a Luncheon Club. It's a fun, friendly, and a fabulous thing to do. I'm happy to give advice to anyone who may be interested.

(Contact Gill Holmes at Swanwick)



"Police? This is St Mary's Ladies' Knitting & Vigilante Circle. We've detained two gents trying to nick the church silver."





# **Sparrows (Passer Domesticus)**

(By Connie Cann)



What do you look for when moving house? Your answer will, of course, depend on your personal priorities.

As we scoured Derbyshire for our new home my wish was for a fertile, workable garden. The heavy clay of North Sussex, where we lived, was enough to dishearten the keenest of gardeners.

We found a house, we found a garden with good, if stony soil, both surrounded by thick hedges. The house could look after itself for a while, we decided, as I applied my energies to the garden.

I quickly realised that, not only was the garden devoid of spring flowers, it was also devoid of birds. I set about changing that.

That was twenty years ago, everything is different now.

As I write, the hellebores and daffodils are in full bloom, the magnolia is about to burst into flower and the newly transplanted Clematis is trailing around the front door showing off its delicate blue flowers and green foliage. Then there's the sparrows, - are yes, the sparrows, those precious, gregarious, noisy sparrows—they are filling the air with their constant chatter. Others may boast of siskins, nuthatch of blackcaps—I have a garden full of sparrows.

The RSPB have a yearly bird count which I take part in. The year I registered 10 sparrows in one sighting I was contacted by the RSPB to verify my count. As the years have passed the annual count of sparrows has increased, the RSPB no longer bother to confirm my count, over 30 this year.

Interesting birds sparrows, I watch them feeding on the bird table or the nut feeder. Arguing and fighting for the best food until the dominant male arrives when they all scatter, perhaps grumbling among themselves at the arrogance of the "boss". He will not be moved by anyone, but has the sense to concede the top spot when the woodpecker visits.

When they are all feeding one sparrow usually keeps watch, sitting high on the top of the hedge. At the first alarm call they act as one, fleeing the bird table for the shelter of the hedge. Then total silence as they wait patiently for the intruder to leave.

Sadly the sparrow hawk is a regular visitor but it rarely catches a sparrow. It is usually a collared dove that ends up as breakfast for the sparrow hawk chick.

Many refer to the sparrows as LBJ's (little brown jobs). However, spend time studying the little birds and you will discover the myriad of browns making up the feathers. You will be amazed at the beauty of this "insignificant" bird.

Jesus was no stranger to the sparrow, using this LBJ as an important illustration. "Your heavenly father knows the sparrow".

It was 2002 and I was taking the morning worship at Goldie College, the prestigious secondary school run by the United Church in Solomon Islands.

The appointed reading was Luke 12v6, I was determined to tell the young people how precious each one of them was using Jesus' words about the sparrow. But it was necessary to explain to them about the sparrow.

Some people will tell you that sparrows are found the whole world over. (interestingly one of the many collective nouns for sparrows is a ubiquity) Not so, very few birds are found in Solomon Islands and certainly not the sparrow. They have the megapode but not the sparrow.

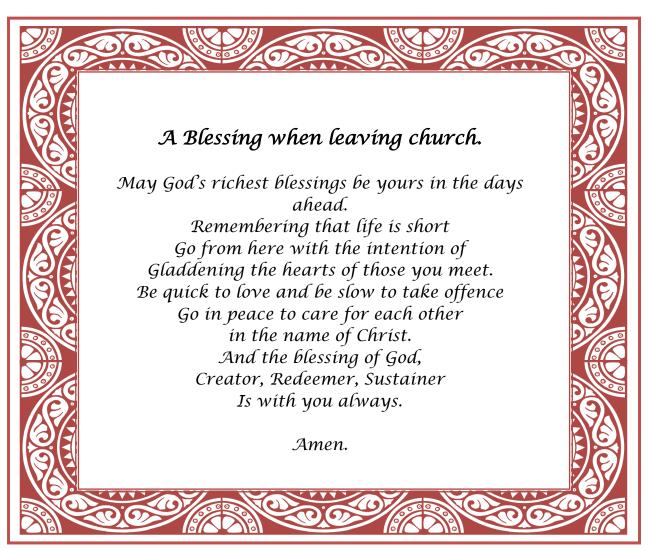
I told them about a little, insignificant, brown bird, devoid of song but having a noisy, loud, cheep. A Bird totally overlooked by the world which looks for colour and song in the birds they admire.

The sparrow, apparently insignificant and ignored by the world was the bird of choice for Jesus as he illustrated His Fathers loving care, as he sought to re-assure his listeners of the value God places on each individual.

This is my main reason for loving my sparrows. Each time I see them I am reminded by God how precious each one of them is and how precious we, his children, are.

As with many families, the last twenty years have been full of ups and downs. Moments of sheer joy and delight and days of utter despair and hopelessness. At these times I would sit and quietly, watch the sparrows and be reminded, again and again, of Gods wonderous love.

"Are not five sparrows sold for a penny and yet not one of them is forgotten before God... do not be afraid, you are more valuable than the sparrow."



#### The Church of St. Mark - Jerusalem.

Even today, hostilities permitted, it is possible for the determined Pilgrim to visit the Church of St. Mark in Jerusalem. The best way to find it is to enter the old City by the Jaffa Gate – through the ancient wall and follow the road around the Citadel, which occupies the site of Herod's Palace. They will then need to follow detailed instructions to negotiate the narrow streets and passageways before arriving at this small Church situated within its Monastery hidden away in the Armenian Quarter.

It is a Syriac Orthodox Church, which is a small Christian Community, and believed to be the site of the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, author of the second Gospel. Mark was not one of the twelve but closely associated with it. He is described as the cousin of Barnabas, and he was a close friend of Paul, the Apostle.

The Syriacs (also called the Assyrians) firmly believe this was the site of the "Upper Room" It was probably a place where Jesus and His disciples would regularly meet, when in Jerusalem and where Jesus washed the feet of His disciples It was where the Last Supper was shared by Jesus and the Twelve Apostles, where the Apostles hid after the Passion and Crucifixion of Jesus, and where Jesus appeared to them after the Resurrection. Peter also went to the house after his liberation from prison by an Angel.

In ancient cities like Jerusalem buildings are often destroyed and built upon again on the same site and ground levels change over time. As the church is built over the Upper Room you actually have to go down stairs to it. Just inside the door of the Church set into a pillar is a stone discovered in 1940. On it is an inscription written in ancient Syriac – a language very similar to Aramaic used by Jesus. The translation is as follows -

This is the house of Mary, mother of John, called Mark. Proclaimed a church by the Holy Apostles under the name of Virgin Mary, mother of God, after the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ into Heaven. Renewed after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in the year AD 73.

Against the south wall is a font with an ornate canopy. Here there is an ancient painting, attributed to St Luke, of Mary holding her baby Jesus. As St. Luke had no idea what Jesus

looked like as a baby he painted His face as he remembered Him. So we have as accurate an idea of what Jesus looked like as is possible to get.

Two other events are believed to have happened here. The election of Matthias to replace Judas Iscariot and the coming of the Holy Spirit on the assembled company at Pentecost.

When we were there on our Pilgrimage in 2012, we were fortunate to have Sister Justina meet us and show us round. She looks after the Church. However, before this we all sat round and listened to her explain about the origins of the Church and the miracles that had happened there. She also gave examples of how miracles were still happening right up to the present time.

Then an incredible thing happened. She sang for us the "Lord's Prayer" in Aramaic, the same words that Jesus would have used. All the Pilgrims were transfixed as God's Spirit swept through the Church and through everyone present. As Rev. Lee Batson, our Pilgrimage Leader, later remarked – "it was a moment when a group of people were almost struck dumb by their experience of the Holy Spirit in the same place where the disciples were empowered by the same Spirit to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ."

Everyone was moved, many to tears, by an experience I have never felt before. Each reacted differently and I myself had a wonderful revelation I will never ever forget.

As we were leaving people in turn were hugging Sister Justina, many overcome and in tears. Personally, I tried to thank her but was so emotional I don't think I made much sense. She said not to thank her, but to thank God. She held my hands and asked for God's blessing on me. I left convinced that I had found the Upper Room and pondering an experience so precious to me. In my minds eye I often return to St. Mark's Church and remember. I hope that you too, dear reader, will go there, either in person or meditatively,

and experience the wonder of God's Love.

From "Holy Land Pilgrimage -2012" (2022) by David Smith.



#### Local Actor Ben Rose.

(By David Hopkinson)



Local actor Ben Rose has come a long way in the past ten years.

As a teenager in 2014 he appeared with Alfreton's Wesley Church drama group in its annual summer comedy.

This year, a decade later, he has won rave reviews for his role in a tense prime-time tv drama - and has been hailed by critics as "one to watch."

Ben originated from Ripley, where the Wood Street Methodist Church was well-known for its top class pantomime.

At Alfreton he joined the cast of "Hero," the story of a pensioner whose imaginary tales of bravery were rumbled when his family decided to stage a "This is Your Life" in his honour.

Ben went on to train at the Rose Bruford drama college and became a familiar face on television, appearing in shows such as "Line of Duty" and "Doctors."

His big break came this year when he was chosen as one of the main characters in "This Town," the latest play by Steven Knight, the creator of "Peaky Blinders."

The six-part, broadcast on the popular Sunday-night BBC1 slot, was set against the violence and unrest of the Midlands in the 1980s, with a group of youngsters, including Ben and fellow actor Levi Brown, forming their own band in a bid to escape the tensions of the times.

As a keen musician, who plays guitar with Miles Kane's live band, Ben was an ideal choice for his part.

Co-starring with Ben in the role of his mother Estella was Michelle Dockery, well-known for her role in "Downton Abbey."

Ben was full of praise for her acting skills and her readiness to help anyone in need.

If a second season is the drama is planned, Ben would be keen to take part. "I love the show. It's really special to me," he said.



Ben is pictured here with co-star Michelle Dockery.

#### Why Did the Chicken Cross the Road? (Theological Version)

**Billy Graham:** The chicken was surrendering all. **Rick Warren:** The chicken was purpose driven.

**John Wesley:** The chicken's heart was strangely warmed. **John Piper:** God decreed the event to maximize his glory.

**C.S. Lewis:** If a chicken finds itself with a desire that nothing on this side can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that it was greated for the other side.

explanation is that it was created for the other side.

**N.T. Wright:** This act of the chicken, which would be unthinkable in British barnyards, reeks of that American individualism that is destructive to community.

**Pluralist:** The chicken took one of many equally valid roads.

Universalist: All chickens cross the road.

**Tim LaHaye:** The chicken didn't want to be left behind.

**Emergent:** For this chicken, it's not the destination that's important. It's the journey itself.

#### A Trip to the Wesley Rooms

(by Mary Murray)



The welcoming entrance.

During Holy Week my hubby and I travelled to a village on the outskirts of Bath to visit our daughter, Christine, son-in-law Jack and our seven-year-old Granddaughter, Polly. Christine and Jack were both working and so we were looking after our Polly. She's a lovely girl, full of beans and loves chatting, cafes, hot chocolate and visits to special places when we are there. We visited one museum of particular interest to David with cars old and new with an American Diner. The other place we visited was in Bristol and it was Wesley's New Room.

The day was very wet, but we parked in a shopping center and probably had a quarter of a mile walk through the rain, complete with umbrella pitter pattering.

It's very hidden and thanks go to Google maps for showing us the way on foot. It's a lovely, welcoming, light building. After a drink and cake, we paid our entrance fee to go into the museum. I have read about the

Wesley's but there is so much to see and do and so much to learn that I could have

stayed much longer, and a return visit is definitely in the diary. Our tickets last for a whole year too.

Some factoids I didn't know:

John & Charles were not tea total – this makes sense as the water wasn't fit to drink, and they enjoyed beer and cider. It was the cheap gin that was ruining the lives of ordinary, poor people.

They were not pacifists and supported troops coming home from the Napoleonic Wars.

They were environmentalists and animal lovers.

We could learn from them about politics today.

John believed in women being able to preach – after he passed away the Methodist Conference voted against women preachers.

Gift or no gift, you are to speak with the children or else you are not to be called a Methodist preacher

John Wesley's Rules To His Preachers About Preaching To Children

1. Don't say I have no gift for this '

Tray earnestly for the gift, and use every hego dosh sput in your way, in order to stain it'

2. Ignore the view that children should be seen and not heard—Talk with them whenever you are any of them'

3. Help parents develop good parenting skills—Thilligently instruct and vebemently exhat all parents at their own houses.'

4. Create special classes for children—Where there are ten children in a nodety, we must meet them at least an hour every week.'

5. Pray for them—Lift up your heart to God'

6. Make sure there is an annual Education Day service—Treach expressly on the education of children'

The Rules about preaching to Children

Charles' children were very musical (no surprise there really), and he encouraged them to play different instruments, but some of their friends said that this was not the Christian way to behave.



Not much has changed

As well as the many Sunday Schools and classes that were being started throughout the country, John built a fee-paying Model Christian School in Kingswood, Bristol for the children of his friends. A preaching house was also built on the site that was used for the school chapel. The money for the operating costs for the school came mostly from donations from the New Room and London. Construction

was delayed because two teachers stole £30 from the monies collected. They became highway robbers! Once caught, one was hanged and the other deported.

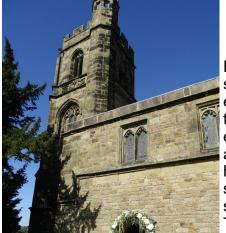
After another drink, we visited the gift shop and purchased some lovely gifts, including one for myself – a tea towel with John himself on his horse and the wording 'Do all the good you can...' Well, how much better will I feel when I'm doing the wiping up?



Kingswood School

#### **Doorways**

(By Margaret Lee)



"The Lord will watch over your coming and going, both now and for evermore." (Psalm 121 v 8)

For many of us, life is full of comings and goings, whether it's a short trip out to the shops or a longer holiday. Outings can feel exciting. I've just read an article about a study done which suggests that the anticipation of a nice event is often as satisfying as the event itself. Outings can be anxiety provoking, like a hospital appointment. Even pleasant things can be so. I find packing for a holiday very anxiety provoking because of the fear of forgetting something important. (I'm a great list maker!) Chatting to friends suggests I'm not unusual in this. Then there is the coming back. This can be a joy too, of being back in our own house after a long time away or relief that a problem is solved or something has been well done. For some people, coming and going is no longer physically possible but our minds can come and go too - thinking back over nice memories, looking at photos, being in touch with family and friends and following their lives.

Sometimes our lives can be so frantically busy with so many things to do that we say we don't know whether we are "coming or going". Whatever the situation, the psalmist says that God is always there with us, guiding us and protecting us. Faith is not about a set of rules but is a **relationship with** God as I heard Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, say during his recent visit to Derbyshire. We can see God in action if we look around us, whether we're in a safe familiar place or a strange, scary setting. We can hear God's quiet nudging, moving us in the direction he

wants us to go. We can sometimes sense God being almost like a touch. We can't see Jesus physically as the disciples did but he has promised that where he is, there we may be also.

We are all different. Some of us prefer active, busy pathways where we jostle along with other people a lot of the time. Others of us are much more at peace when we can experience quiet reflective times. Some people are constantly struggling to cope with what life has thrown at them and anything above the parapet is a rare luxury and even, perhaps, a scary one. One of the saddest things I encountered in my working life with abused and neglected children was, once removed into care, their frequent inability to enjoy the highlights of life which other children take for granted - birthdays, holidays, Christmas, a school outing. This was often because they felt they didn't deserve them or simply because it was all so unusual they couldn't cope with the situation.



Whatever the case, the words of the psalm can be a reassurance or even a challenge. So can the words of Jesus when he said:

"I tell you the truth. I am the gate of the sheep...
whoever enters through me will be saved.
He will come in and go out and find pasture."
(John Ch 10 v 7 and 9)



# <u>Let's Think & Pray-</u> "Being alive in Prayernot sleepwalking! And using the Armour of God"

Over the Easter holidays Sam and I were at the *Spring Harvest* event. The theme this year was 'Up & Alive!' Paul is writing to the (new) church at Ephesus to say "Wake up!" (Chap 2) Most of the Bible teaching theme was the section within Chapter 6:10-18 *The armour of God.* 

Faith is often about taking some things off and working out what to 'put on.' The armour of God is a good 'visual' to help us do that. We are often fascinated (e.g. in films) by superheroes. Paul was concerned (chapters 4-6) with the practice of Christian life on earth, and to live with purpose and unity in the body of Christ. The armour of God is his very practical application of how to do this. Paul draws on the flesh & blood superheroes of his daythe Roman army. Paul was struck by the uniform of the soldiers guarding him as he writes from prison. He weaves this imagery into the narrative of his letter to the Ephesians.

Two Spring Harvest speakers that encouraged and challenged me were Pete Greig (24:7 Prayer movement) and Oliva Amartey (Executive Director of Elim Pentecostal Church) Pete Greig warned against being 'lazy, shrink wrapped Christians', where we can wrap God up into a neat, measured being. He went onto remind people about the need to 'Be alert in Prayer' and not to 'sleepwalk in prayer.' He concluded with some challenging words: "It is not (only) about saying our prayers, rather that we become them."

We are familiar with the words in the Lord's Prayer "deliver us from evil." For some of us the mention of Satan/the evil one may conjure up a shadowy, supernatural being and is the stuff of jokes. C S Lewis puts its clearly: " There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them." Olivia Armartey (in the themed workbook) goes on to explain that: "Jesus provided the disciples (and us)

with the Lord's Prayer. 'Deliver us from evil.' In this line we see that Jesus is not just addressing evil, he is indirectly pointing us to the originator and instigator of that evil, Satan himself." We have all read Bible narrations of Jesus' encounters with the devil. To expand on evil, its origin and its embodiment would easily take up the whole pages (and more) of this newsletter. But in short, we would be wise to take note of Jesus and of Paul. Paul tackles the subject of evil head-on. In Ephesians he clearly explains how Christians are to frame and develop their ability to both stand and withstand (Chapter 6:13 "..put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground..")

Armartey refers to a friend who uses a personal prayer that she calls 'Praying on the armour.' Picturing a sword, using it to cut down bad thoughts, etc.

A Prayer (say it slowly, after reading Ephesians 6:18): "Lord, When I am vulnerable to attack, may I be prompted by your word, by the Holy Spirit. When I advance into new territories, may you work through me by your Holy Spirit. When I feel threatened and tempted, may your Holy Spirit bring your word quickly to my mind. Amen."

God Bless you and sustain you in your prayer-life.

#### Rev. Pete



# World Day of Prayer.

(By Mary Murray)

Swanwick Methodist hosted this year's World Day of Prayer for our region (Alfreton, Riddings, Somercotes & Swanwick) on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

The 2024 Service was prepared by an ecumenical group of Christian women from Palestine, the land in which Jesus was born, ministered and died, where the Christian faith is rooted. It was prepared two years ago but felt very emotional at this time. The theme was 'Bear with one another in Love' and we reflected on the Olive Tree. Some have been growing for years and years, like our own oak trees. Different stories were shared, and these are snippets from the service.

Let me introduce you to Eleonor:

She is one of the older generation who, like the trunk of the olive tree, has witnessed many years of wars and violence. She is a Palestinian Christian, a member of the Greek Orthodox Church in the Holy Land. She comes from an old, deeply rooted Jerusalem family. In the early 19th century, her great-grandfather established St. George's Orthodox Church which enabled Christians living outside the city walls to have a place to worship. That church remained in existence until 'the Catastrophe', or Nakba, of 1948, when 750,000 Palestinians were forced to flee, disperse and become refugees, her family included. Due to heavy shelling and bombardment, her parents ran for their lives. They took shelter at her Mother's Cousins' home hoping to return soon to their original home and St George's Church. That never happened.

Today her parent's home and St George's Church have become the Central Confederation House, an Israeli Cultural Centre.

Let me introduce you to Lina.

On May 11 2022, Lina lost her Aunt Shireen, a famous journalist who was killed in Jenin. Aunt Shireen was like the branch of an olive tree, resisting the strong winds that threatened to erase the truth of Palestinian experience When she died, Palestine lost a legend and a famous Al Jazeera journalist. As Lina's aunt, her godmother at baptism and her best friend, Shireen was Lina's role model. She was also a role model to many young Palestinian women. Lina cherishes all the moments spent with her, talking about art, politics and life.

Let me introduce you to Sara.

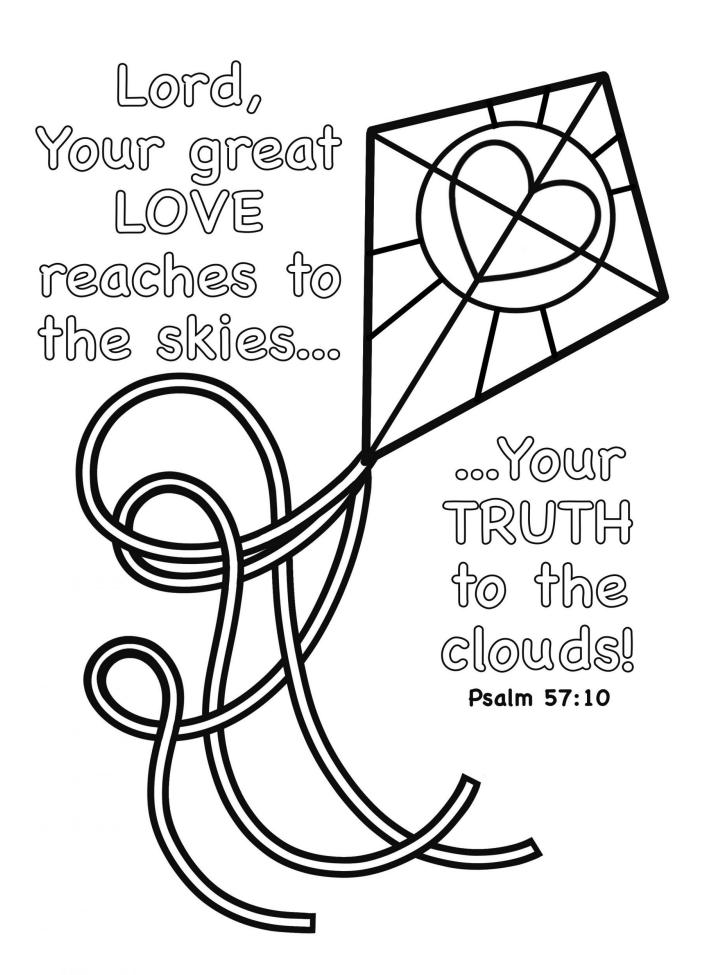
Sara says she sometimes feels like the leaf on an olive tree, connected through the branches to the roots, nourished from within. She was born and raised in Jerusalem as a Lutheran Christian, where life has always been challenging. She is glad that things are changing in society as indicated by her church ordaining its first female pastor. Her own family history is connected with that of Palestine. She wants to share a story with you that shows what it means to be a Palestinian Christian. Sara: My grandparents used to live in Jaffa. They grew up there before 1948, living alongside other Christians, Muslims and Jews. When the state of Israel was created in 1948, Palestinians who had lived on the land for thousands of years, were displaced. The Israeli forces came to my grandparents' home and forced them out. This caused my grandparents to become refugees in Jordan. Many years later, my grandparents came for a visit to Jerusalem, and my parents took us on a trip to Jaffa. They were excited to show us the home they used to live in. Everything had changed except for the trees they planted, which helped us to identify the place but, sadly, those living in the house were hostile to us. I know that the tree from where I came is strong and resilient. I can bear with others in love because my Grandparents did. Their love is what makes me flourish like the leaf on an olive tree.

It is heartbreaking to see what is happening on the news every day and we must pray for peace for our World and especially the Middle East.

One of the charities that work there used to be called The Bible Lands Society – they produced Carol Sheets every Christmas, and still do. They are now called 'Embrace the Middle East' and are in need of our prayers and donations.

To find out more, and to see what is happening now in Palestine visit their website embrace.org or write to them at Old Library Building, Queen Victoria Road, High Wycombe, HP11 1PG

# A time to relax and create.



# Miscellaneous observations on life

I burn about 2000 calories every time I put on fitted sheets by myself.

It's weird, being the same age as old people.

One who boasts of being a self-made person relieves the Lord of a lot of responsibility.

If you can't be kind, at least have the decency to be vague.

Living on Earth is expensive, but it does include a free trip around the sun every year.

You know that indestructible black box that is used on airplanes? Why don't they make the whole plane out of that stuff?

As long as there are exams, there will be prayer in schools.

# REGULAR EVENTS AROUND THE CIRCUIT.

#### **ALFRETON WESLEY**

enough interest is shown.

Monday Treble Clef Ladies Choir practices. 7.30pm. The choir is always pleased to welcome new faces - or, to be correct, new voices. Just turn up. Tuesday 2.00pm. Tuesday Fellowship. This was formerly the ladies' fellowship, but the menfolk were keen to join, so the meeting is now open for anyone. There's a varied programme of speakers and other activities. Friday Friendship Club. Aimed mainly at the older generation, this meeting offers chair-based exercises and crafts and other activities. Also the chance to meet lots of new friends. 11.00am to 1.00pm. Wesley Film Club. First Saturday of every month. 1st Saturday of each month 2.00pm. Films range from black-and-white rom-coms to up-to-the minute musicals and comedies. Admission free, but a requested £2 donation towards refreshments. 3rd Saturday of each month 10.00am to 12 noon. Coffee, teas, biscuits, cakes. Bring

the Bible Society. Come and enjoy a coffee and chat.

Also, our church is well-known for its dramatic and musical activities, staging regular plays and choir items. The pandemic has brought our popular shows to a halt, but these could be revived if

and buy stall. Proceeds go to a wide variety of charities and worthy causes, ranging from children's hospice to

For more information about any of our church activities, ring David Hopkinson on 01773 833627

#### **CLAY CROSS**

2nd Monday of each month - Prayer Meeting

11.00am - 12.00pm

2nd & 4th Tuesday of each month - 3C's Craft Club

Chat, Cake & Craft From 2.00pm

2nd & 4th Tuesday of each month - Soup & Sweet Club

12.00pm

3rd Tuesday of each month - Bible Study

2.00pm

Led by Mike Render

**BIRCHWOOD** 

2nd Wednesday of each month - Coffee Morning 10.00am until 12.00 noon.

**CRICH** 

Monday - 9.00am - Prayer Meeting

Friday - 9.30am - Pop Along for children - 0-3 years

accompanied by an adult (term time only)

3rd Sunday of each month - 9.30am - Family Café Church

3rd Tuesday of the month - 2.00pm - Healing Prayer Service

Alternate Wednesdays - 2.00pm - Muddle Along - Knitting and Craft

2nd Friday in the month - 2.00pm - Come Along - Singalong

For people coping with dementia, their carers and friends. Local musicians entertain, followed by tea,

cakes and chat.

**NEWTON** 

Monday - Keep Fit - 7.45pm

Thursday - Coffee & Chat 9.30am until 11.30am

- Fellowship 11.30am

1st Saturday of each month - Coffee Morning with English Breakfasts and Hot

sandwiches 10.00am until 12.00pm

2nd Wednesday of each month - Afternoon Teas 2.00pm until 4.00pm

SOUTH WINGFIELD ZION

2nd and 4th Tuesday - Ladies' Fellowship 2.00pm (excl Jan, Feb and Aug)

2nd Wednesday - Local History Group 7.30pm (Please contact

Christine Walden email chrissiewalden@hotmail.co.uk)

3rd Wednesday - Bible Study 2.00pm

3rd Thursday - W.I. Craft (Please contact Dorothy Wright

(01773831771).

#### **SUTTON - ST JOHN'S**

2nd Thursday of each month

Ploughman's Lunch

Served in the Hall from 12 noon - 1.15pm Jacket potato, Ham/Cheese, Salad Bar and

Homemade Sweets

11th July, 8th August, 12th September, 10th October,

14th November and 12th December.

All for just £7.00.

3rd Sunday of each month (except July which is usually the 4th)

Sunday at St John's

Buffet Tea and followed by Songs of Praise

Starting at 4.30pm

If you would like to attend please contact

John Whitehead on 01623 550929 (This would help

for catering purposes).

4th Wednesday of each month

Praise and Fellowship meetings are held from

September through to June. These are held in Church and we have a variety of Speakers, mostly from across

the District

We meet at 7.00pm for light refreshments with the

meeting starting at 7.30pm.

Come and share with us.

#### **SWANWICK**

2nd Tuesday of each month Amber Friendship Club

> Afternoon Tea 2.30pm to 4.30pm

Cost: £4.00

For more information telephone 01773 609942 or

just come along.

4th Tuesday of each month Luncheon Club

12 noon to 2.00pm

For more details please contact

Gill on 01773 607860

Zoom Services

Tuesday Light Touch Bible Study - 7.30pm

Thursday Circuit Compline - 9.00pm Sunday Evening Worship - 6.00pm

If you're struggling to get out and about, especially with the darker nights coming, then please feel free to join us at any of these events. Contact Mary on 07958 168295 or by email on mary.murray@w3z.co.uk

We are also streaming our morning services that can be accessed via YouTube. Just put Swanwick Methodist Church in the search and we should be there. You can either view while the service is taking place or later on. Either way, if for some reason, you can't make it to your own Church, this is a good alternative and as good as Songs of Praise! In fact maybe better because you will recognise some faces there. Watch it while enjoying a cuppa on a nice comfy settee. Pets welcome too.

All items to Amanda Hurley by email please to:-

ajhurley007@outlook.com or by post to:-

Borders Mission Circuit
Clay Cross Methodist Church
High Street
Clay Cross
Chesterfield S45 9EE
Telephone No. 01246 866160



the Youth Club put its skateboard ramp too close to the church's west wall!"

Editor: Amanda Hurley
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#### **PLEASE NOTE:**

Ministers' usual day off

Rev Robert Hurley - Friday

Rev Simon Rose - Monday

Rev Peter Taylor - Friday

Please only contact Ministers on their day off in the case of an emergency.

The Circuit Office is usually open Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday

9.00 am - 1.00 pm

If you intend visiting the office, please give me a call so I can ensure I'm there.

These arrangements are subject to change to accommodate unexpected events and evening meetings.

#### Circuit Website.

Please send your posters, notices, adverts etc. for the website to:-

Julian.bonfield@outlook.com

# www.bordersmissioncircuit.org.uk

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