

Triangle



The quarterly magazine of the
Methodist Churches of
Springdale and Wombourne

Autumn 2015

The man who invented harvest festivals

David Hotchkiss, editor



Hello and welcome. Here we are again in the season of harvest festivals, when churches and school halls all over the country are filled with the scent of fresh vegetables and cut flowers. It's a special aroma that at once whisks me back to childhood and to one particular year when, having heard a guest speaker tell the tale of an adventurous beetroot, we were then told to illustrate the story on grey sugarpaper, regardless of the fact that our class had evidently run out of red paint.

"Is that an apple, David?" "No, miss, it's beetroot." "I don't think beetroot is that colour, is it?" "There's no red paint, miss." "Just get on with your work, David."

The story of the harvest festival as we know it has some bizarre elements of its own. Although part of the church calendar since medieval times, its role had diminished until, as late as the mid-1840s, the Reverend Robert Stephen Hawker, poet and vicar of Morwentstow in Cornwall, came on the scene and more or less reinvented it.

The eccentric Rev Hawker's behaviour is said to have been as colourful as his off-duty clothes. He talked to birds, excommunicated his cat for mousing on a Sunday, and kept a large pig as a pet.

Despite his ways, he was much loved by the parishioners and they were pleased to adopt his new ideas for celebrating harvest, which included decking the church with fruit and veg, flowers and bread. In fact, it proved so popular that his version of harvest festival was soon accepted everywhere.

In this age of 24-hour shopping, and little poverty compared with the days of our parents and grandparents, it is perhaps hard to grasp what such a show of God's bounty would have meant to ordinary people. And today it's all too easy to forget how small a share people in other parts of the world will get due to natural or, more likely, man-made disasters, from rising temperatures to crushing wars.

In the midst of plenty, with so many good gifts around us, we should indeed thank the Lord for all his love.

The deadline for the next edition of Triangle is

December 6

Articles can be given to me or your stewards or sent by post to

David Hotchkiss

Lamentations and praise

The Reverend Christopher Collins



Sometimes it can feel as though the time continuum of our life is irreparably severed. Something happens which means our life won't be the same again. To describe these times as "difficult" seems to completely miss the depth of pain we bear and it can feel such an isolated place to be. I am sure that at some time or other we have all felt the same.

Yet people have faced such moments since the dawn of time and it is part of our common human experience. Yet even though we know it is part of our humanity, it doesn't make it any easier. We quite reasonably ask those searching questions. "Where is God in this?" Even though we sometimes feel as though we have to be polite with God, there is good evidence in the Bible that lamenting before God is part of our relationship. We find this in the Psalms. For example the Psalmist writes in Psalm 13: "How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever? / How long will you hide your face from me?" I never read this as a calm question but more as angry rage "why?", "why me?", "where are you God?" As someone said, it is not the polite question about a timetable but rather it is the impatient pleading in the face of a pain which cannot be endured.

Yet the psalmist finds hope and declares a song of praise at the end of the Psalm. It seems quite a turnaround and we can be left asking "how?" Well I can only speak of my own experience that when I have felt at my lowest I have also found myself within a community of the faithful who have carried me through. When I felt least like praying, they prayed with me. When I was blind to God, they helped to open my eyes to see God once more. It was within the safety of that community that I was able to ask the dangerous questions of "why?" And in that community I could still praise God.

In my experience, and I think in the Psalmist's, it was not that there was a sudden restoration to faith. Instead it revealed a faith that allowed those questions to be asked in the first place as our eyes were lifted in our anger and rage away from ourselves and towards God. We can only utter our plea in the same faith that leads us to praise.

So I am thankful a faith community that allowed me to make this journey for myself and for those who allow me to make it again. I hope and pray that we can be such communities to each other so our gaze can always be lifted towards God so that our lament and praise can let us experience God through all the trials and tribulations of life in a way that is real.

Alex saw the best in everyone

Barbara Sturgeon on the life of her father Alexander Blackmore

Alex was born in Torquay, Devon, in 1920, the eldest of four children, three boys and a girl. His father worked in a high-class grocery shop.

He had a happy childhood and was a Cub and Boy Scout. His favourite time was spent sitting on his father's knee while he read him stories about history, a love of which stayed with him for the rest of his life. Sundays were spent at Sunday school, as a pupil and later a teacher, after which he served at the altar of St Marychurch, a high Anglican church in Torquay. He loved the pomp and ceremony, colourful robes, parades and the smell of incense. Sadly, the church was bombed, killing most of the Sunday school children and their teachers. It was a miracle that his brothers weren't attending that day. Their uncle had died a few days earlier and they went to visit their aunt instead.

Alex trained as a gas fitter when he left school but in 1940 he joined the RAF with visions of the Biggles books he loved reading as a child. He trained as an armourer, a job which he enjoyed. In 1944 his plane crashed near Seascale in Cumbria. It was on fire before the pilot was able to make an emergency landing but luckily Alex was thrown out and escaped the explosion which followed. He was flown to RAF Cosford where they treated his burns and, luckily, before his planned grafts a nurse noticed his skin was beginning to heal. After many months of specialist care his face was barely scarred.



Alex Blackmore: never bored

In 1945 he married Pauline and was demobbed in the following year. Alex went back to the gas company and Barbara was born in 1947. After the war the country was desperately short of teachers and an appeal went out for ex-servicemen to train for the profession. Alex applied and trained at Wimpole Hall, near Cambridge, a city which appealed to him at once. His first post was as an assistant teacher at Stretham Primary School in Cambridgeshire. Pauline and Barbara joined him shortly after. Having bought a house in Cambridge, he joined Wesley Methodist Church and preached his first sermon a few months later. Being a university town there was ample opportunity to meet and make friends with professors and doctors of divinity and Alex enjoyed nothing more than a good discussion about religion.

Pauline and Alex had two more children, Richard and Robert and they also accommodated students from the university in the spare room. Most people were

wary about having foreigners in their houses but Alex and Pauline opened their home to students from the West Indies, Africa and China.

It was rare to own a car in the early 1950s but Alex bought an old Austin Ruby from a friend, which enabled the family to go on holiday to Devon to see his Mum, Dad and brothers, plus other outings which were much enjoyed.

He became the headteacher of Strettham Primary school and the family moved to the school house next door. In the mid 1960s he took up a post at Milton Primary School where he taught until he retired. He was in the happy position that he loved his job and found teaching primary age children very rewarding.

Pauline was always quietly supportive of the family and they were upset when she was diagnosed with dementia. However Alex, true to form and his marriage vows, took on the jobs she used to do. He looked after her at home for several years, cooking meals and increasingly doing the other household chores.

His interest in everything around him, his faith, love of history, art, music, religion and most of all his family, meant he was never bored and always managed to see the best in everyone. Alex would wish to be remembered as someone who enjoyed a full and happy life.

(Alex's funeral was held at Wombourne on September 23rd.)



Alex was presented with a certificate marking his 60 years of preaching by Superintendent the Rev David Lavender

You say, He says . . .

With thanks to All Saints, Darlaston, and Barbara Tromans

You say: It's impossible

God says: All things are possible (Luke 18: 27)

You say: Nobody really loves me

God says: I love you (John 3: 16 & John 13: 34)

You say: I can't go on

God says: My grace is sufficient (2 Corinthians 12: 9 & Psalm 91: 15)

You say: I can't work things out

God says: I will direct your steps (Proverbs 3: 5-6)

You say: I can't do it

God says: You can do all things (Philippians 4: 13)

You say: I am not able

God says: I am able (2 Corinthians 9: 8)

You say: It's not worth is

God says: It will be worth is (Romans 8: 28)

You say: I can't forgive myself

God says: I forgive you (1 John 1: 9 & Romans 8: 1)

You say: I can't manage

God says: I will supply all your needs (Philippians 4: 19)

You say: I'm afraid

God says: I have not given you a spirit of fear (2 Timothy 1: 7)

You say: I am always worried and frustrated

God says: Cast all your cares on me (1 Peter 5: 7)

You say: I don't have enough faith

God says: I have given everyone a measure of faith (Romans 12: 3)

You say: I'm not clever enough

God says: I give you wisdom (1 Corinthians 1: 30)

You say: I feel all alone

God says: I will never leave you or forsake you (Hebrews 13: 5)



Springdale pastoral news

Jane Rawlings, pastoral secretary

Well autumn is creeping up and soon people will be mentioning Christmas and dates in our diaries will be filling up.

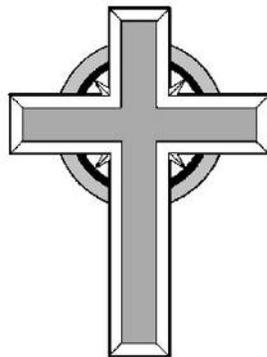
We have several baptisms arranged in the next few weeks, so more about those in the next issue. It is always a blessing and a pleasure to be part of these special occasions.

Since my last triangle we have sadly lost Tom Varty who has been a dedicated member of Springdale for many years. He was a gentleman who would always greet you with a smile and a witty remark. In the last few years his failing health made life difficult for him, but he will be sadly missed. We also heard the devastating news of the death of our minister Chris's father, who was taken suddenly from his family. We hold Chris, Jenny and all the family in our prayers over the coming days, weeks and months as they come to terms with this tragic loss.

A number of Springdale's flock have been having a difficult time with health issues, visits to hospital for tests or perhaps a short stay in hospital. These are always worrying times for everyone concerned, but if you are one of the unfortunate ones going through a difficult time at the moment, do not despair! Your family here at Springdale are always thinking about you, praying for you and holding you in their hearts. Also remember that our Lord is for ever with us, giving us strength, understanding and patience throughout the uncertain times. He is with us as the medical professionals treat and care for us and will never let us down.

Congratulations to anyone who has celebrated a birthday or special occasion recently. I have heard of a few who have reached a milestone, but won't be so bold as to announce their ages. Needless to say I hope all concerned had a fantastic time and fun was had by all.

God bless, Jane



Prayers and pray-ers

Bob Hughes

In spite of our doubts, we must continue to pray, for the very simple reason that at the very heart of prayer is communion with God, our heavenly, loving Father.

When we pray, let us remember this, that there is no such thing as unanswered pray-ers. Our prayers may not be answered in the way we would always want them to be answered, but God does answer pray-ers – those folk who pray – and they will be heard, and in His own time and in His own way they will be answered.

Our whole life in four verses

Jackie Neilson

As we're in the season of autumn and harvest, I thought I'd share this with you:

Fruitful trees, the spirit's sowing

by Timothy Dalton-Smith

Fruitful trees, the Spirit's sowing,
may we ripen and increase,
fruit to life eternal growing,
rich in love and joy and peace.

Laden branches freely bearing
gifts the Giver loves to bless;
here is fruit that grows by sharing,
patience, kindness, gentleness.

Rooted deep in Christ our Master,
Christ our pattern and our goal,
teach us, as the years fly faster,
goodness, faith and self-control.

Fruitful trees, the Spirit's tending,
may we grow till harvests cease;
till we taste, in life unending,
heaven's love and joy and peace.



From The Poetic Bible. These verses relate to Galatians 5: 22-23.

What moving verses. Not a word is wasted in expressing the true meaning in this poem. Verse one talks of fruitfulness, relating to harvest, but also us growing and sharing in faith in our community. The second verse is about sharing and caring, with those big branches here and around the world. The third verse is about getting older, time going quickly; we have grown in faith, hopefully wiser, to share with tolerance. The final verse tells us to keep giving and sharing in the harvest till we're called by Christ. Don't you think less is more (words) and brings a clearer understanding of our calling with this beautiful, meaningful poem? Our whole life in four verses. Harvest, but life's harvest, as much as from the ground. Living faith

Picture yourself . . .

There are just three primary colours, yet a stroll around any art gallery will show you the infinite range of shades an artist can produce from them (they sometimes have to add a little black and white to the mix). We may have a limited range of opportunities available to us as we go through life, but with imagination, dedication and God's help we can mix and apply them in the best possible way, eventually painting a picture of our lives the Old Masters themselves would envy.

Well done, girls!

Bob Hughes reports on a family success story

Congratulations to Kayleigh and Jodie Hughes, daughters of Paul and grand-daughters of Joyce and Bob, who competed in the Riding for the Disabled National Championships at Harpury College in Gloucestershire in July. Kayleigh came first in the Senior Section and Jodie came second in the Junior Section of the Countryside Challenge event.

Then, after lunch, they changed horses and competed in the Combined Training Dressage where Kayleigh came second and Jodie came sixth. It was a lovely weekend with all competitors doing well representing their respective areas of Britain.



Kayleigh and Jodie at the competition

Just like Mother's

A young woman was preparing a ham for dinner. After she had cut off the end of the ham, she placed it in a tin for baking. Her friend asked her: "Why did you cut off the end of the ham?"

"I really don't know," she replied, "but my mother always did, so I thought you were supposed to."

Talking to her mother later, she asked why she always cut off the end of a ham before baking it. "I don't know," she confessed. "But it's the way your gran always did it."

Some days later the young woman was visiting her grandmother and couldn't resist asking: "Gran, why is it you always cut off the end of a ham before baking it?"

The elderly lady shrugged and said: "Well, dear, if I didn't, it wouldn't fit into my baking tin, would it . . ."

From Bursting At The Seams (Monarch books)

A big thank-you for your action

A letter from Denis Campion

Dear Friends,

A big thank-you for your continuing support for Action for Children.



In June people from around the circuit took part in a sponsored walk around West Park to raise funds. This takes place each June. It would be lovely to have more support from the churches next year.

This year's walk raised £811.70, and with funds already in hand, took our grand total to £1,807.93.

Last year alone you helped 300,000 vulnerable children, young people and their families. For every £1 raised, 96p went to helping them. Last year, more children and their families across the UK were helped by Action for Children than by any other children's charity, and, with your help, we can continue to be in the forefront.

Please ring me on 339597 if you would like to buy diaries, calendars and Christmas cards.

Yours in fellowship,

Denis

Brenda Shuttleworth writes: Amanda Quinn, our regional fundraising co-ordinator with Action for Children, spent the day with us at our recent synod. She shared with us extracts from the latest Action for Children Impact Report, emphasising that the charity's achievements could not have been made without our support.

The report states that Action for Children has had a positive impact on the lives of 300,000 children, young people, their parents and carers in the last year.

Action for Children has pioneered the approach of "early action"; from targeted interventions at the earliest possible opportunity for children and families most at risk, to early support from parents and children in need of a little extra help to prevent problems from escalating. This work has laid the foundations for children to grow up strong, resilient and with hope for their future.

The report goes on to say that local authorities are currently challenged to implement longer-term preventative measures when faced with severe budget cuts, forcing the focus on to highly-targeted, reactive delivery. The challenge for Action for Children is to make the case for change by highlighting the positive impact of informed, evidence-based early action services.



HRH The Duchess of Cambridge visited the AfC Cape Hill Children's Centre in Smethwick earlier this year. She was given an introduction to the work being done there and met families who have faced severe issues in their lives, such as domestic violence and serious health problems. AfC provides more than 300 children's centres all over England. The Duchess was presented with flowers by two of the service users.

Amanda shared with us some impressive figures which demonstrate the effective use of resources by Action for Children:

96% reduced risk of physical, sexual or emotional abuse

87% of children improved their emotional well-being

97% of young people remain in education, employment or training after 16 years of age

97% of children with complex health needs sustained maximum independence

93% of carers believe we have made their job as foster carers easier

Amanda always thanks us most warmly for the support that we give and we would want to pass those thanks on to you. Thank you for filling your League of Light boxes faithfully, thank you for bringing your stamps to church, and, in anticipation, thank you for buying diaries for 2016 and choosing Action for Children Christmas cards which will soon be available.

Wombourne pastoral news

Pauline Hotchkiss, Wombourne pastoral secretary

REACHING OUT

Our visits to The Maltings resumed again in September. We shared in our harvest service and enjoyed singing our favourite hymns from the season. We were able to place our gifts on a specially decorated table. Our friends appreciate our visits and we feel it is an important part of our pastoral care in the community. The member of the group who was diagnosed with skin cancer is feeling much better and we thank God for answering our many prayers for her. We also think about Ivy, who was taken ill at our last meeting. We hope that God will keep her safe in his hands and that she will receive his healing.

Another group from church visit Himley Mill Care Home each month. They witness to two units at the home and I am sure the residents and the staff enjoy this time of fellowship.

If anyone is interested in joining in with either of these monthly events, please ask Carole Walker about the Maltings and Denis Beaumont about Himley Mill. I am sure there will be a warm welcome for new people joining them.

GOOD NEWS

We celebrated the birth of Isabella in our Spring Edition with a lovely photograph. We are now celebrating her baptism with another cute picture.

NEWS OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

Congratulations to Catherine Horton (June's grand-daughter) on achieving 12 GCSE passes in her recent exams, six at Grade A and six at Grade A*.

She has now joined the sixthform at King Edward VI Camp Hill School for Girls in Birmingham.



Isabella Jasmine Tomlinson at her christening

SPECIAL CELEBRATIONS

The family of Cyntra Beaumont celebrated her 90th birthday recently with a lunch party. Congratulations also to Jane Meddings who celebrates her 60th birthday in October.

PRAYER

The prayer-circle meet every two months to up-date our prayer cards. At the meetings in July and September we prayed for the families of those who have lost loved ones. We always name our older loved ones who are no longer able to care for themselves and are in residential care. We pray especially for each one of them.

New names are added to our prayer list and the names of those who are well and no longer in need of the prayer-circle are removed. As well this is a time of shared fellowship of the members of the group. We ask God to sustain those who pray daily for those in need.

SAD NEWS

It was very sad to hear the sudden news of the death of Chris's father. Our thoughts and prayers are with Chris and Jenny, Melanie and Dave and all the family. We also think of Barbara and Keith, her two brothers and their wives and all the many grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Alex Blackmore, who died early in September. We were able to say our goodbyes to Alex at the service of celebration for his life. Alex's family and friends then shared in afternoon tea in the schoolroom.

We have fond memories of the stalwart work of Peter Spreadbury in helping at the annual Christmas bazaar, supporting Diana, his wife. He lost his battle with cancer on September 13th. Our hearts go out to Dianna and all the family at this sad time. We pray for all those who have lost loved ones and ask that God will comfort you and sustain you.

We continue to pray for Cathy Anderson, and Robyn, the grand-daughter of Eric and Carole Walker and ask that Your Holy Spirit will watch over them, and also Ruth, Eric's sister, who is terminally ill with cancer. All those who are in need of our love and prayers for healing will be blessed.

Many thanks are due to Denis, our Lay Pastoral Worker and all the Pastoral Group visitors, for all the work they do in caring for us all in so many ways. If I have failed to mention anyone with a need or with good news then I apologise. Jesus knows our every need and will watch over us.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

As a dog owner, I would like to leave you with these thoughts. Life should be a process of continuous learning. If you let a dog be your teacher, you would learn such things as these:

When loved ones come home, rush to greet them. Don't pass up the chance to go for an outing in the car and let the experience of fresh air and the wind in your face feel great. Thrive on attention and let people touch you. On warm days, take time to lie down on the grass. On hot days, drink lots of water and lie in the shade. Delight in the simple joy of a long walk. Be loyal. If you desire what lies buried, dig until you find it. If someone is having a bad day, sit quietly nearby, and nuzzle them gently.

Yes, we can learn many valuable lessons from our canine friends.

My son the baseball hero

With thanks to Bob Hughes and Bob Hampson

At a fundraising dinner for a school that serves children with learning disabilities, the father of one of the students delivered a speech that would never be forgotten by all who attended. After praising the school and its dedicated staff, he offered a question: "When not interfered with by outside influences, everything nature does, is done with perfection. Yet my son, Shay, cannot learn things as other children do. He cannot understand things as other children do. Where is the natural order of things in my son?"

The audience was stilled by the question. The father continued. "I believe that when a child like Shay, who was mentally and physically disabled, comes into the world, an opportunity to realize true human nature presents itself, and it comes in the way other people treat that child." Then he told the following story:

Shay and I had walked past a park where some boys Shay knew were playing baseball. Shay asked, "Do you think they'll let me play?"

I knew that most of the boys would not want someone like Shay on their team, but as a father, I also understood that if my son were allowed to play, it would give him a much-needed sense of belonging and some confidence to be accepted by others in spite of his handicaps.

I approached one of the boys on the field and asked (not expecting much) if Shay could play. The boy looked around for guidance and said, "We're losing by six runs and the game is in the eighth inning. I guess he can be on our team and we'll try to put him in to bat in the ninth inning."

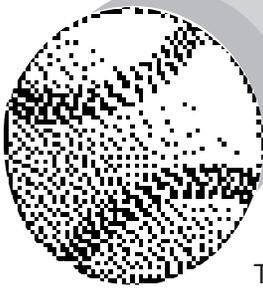
Shay struggled over to the team's bench and, with a broad smile, put on a team shirt. I watched with a small tear in my eye and warmth in my heart. The boys saw my joy at my son being accepted.

In the bottom of the eighth inning, Shay's team scored a few runs but was still behind by three. In the top of the ninth inning, Shay put on a glove and played in the right field. Even though no hits came his way, he was obviously ecstatic just to be in the game and on the field, grinning from ear to ear as I waved to him from the stands.

In the bottom of the ninth inning, Shay's team scored again. Now, with two outs and the bases loaded, the potential winning run was on base and Shay was scheduled to be next at bat.

At this juncture, do they let Shay bat and give away their chance to win the game?

Surprisingly, Shay was given the bat. Everyone knew that a hit was all but impossible because Shay didn't even know how to hold the bat properly, much less connect with the ball. However, as Shay stepped up to the plate, the pitcher,



recognizing that the other team was putting winning aside for this moment in Shay's life, moved in a few steps to lob the ball in softly so Shay could at least make contact.

The first pitch came and Shay swung clumsily and missed. The pitcher again took a few steps forward to toss the ball softly towards Shay. As the pitch came in, Shay swung at the ball and hit a slow ground ball right back to the pitcher. The game would now be over.

The pitcher picked up the soft grounder and could have easily thrown the ball to the first baseman. Shay would have been out and that would have been the end of the game. Instead, the pitcher threw the ball right over the first baseman's head, out of reach of all team mates. Everyone from the stands and both teams started yelling, "Shay, run to first! Run to first!"

Never in his life had Shay ever run that far, but he scampered down the baseline, wide-eyed and startled, and made it to first base. Everyone yelled, "Run to second, run to second!" Catching his breath, Shay awkwardly ran towards second, gleaming and struggling to make it to the base.

The crowd yelled, "Shay, run to third! Run to third!"

By the time Shay rounded second base, the right fielder had the ball – the smallest guy on their team who now had his first chance to be the hero for his team. He could have thrown the ball to the second-baseman for the tag, but he understood the pitcher's intentions so he, too, intentionally threw the ball high and far over the third-baseman's head.

Shay reached third base because the opposing shortstop ran to help him by turning him in the direction of third base, and shouted, "Run to third!" Shay ran toward third base deliriously as the runners ahead of him circled the bases toward home. All were screaming, "Shay! Shay! Shay! All the way, Shay!"

As Shay rounded third, the boys from both teams, and the spectators, were on their feet screaming, "Shay, run home! Run home!" Shay ran to home, stepped on the plate, and was cheered as the hero who hit the grand slam and won the game for his team.

"That day", said the father softly with tears now rolling down his face, "the boys from both teams helped bring a piece of true love and humanity into this world.

"Shay didn't make it to another summer. He died that winter, having never forgotten being the hero and making me so happy, and coming home and seeing his mother tearfully embrace her little hero of the day."

Words of wisdom

Jackie Neilson

I'd like to share these words of wisdom with you (Express & Star letters page, May 2015).

*The Budget should be balanced
The Treasury should be refilled
Public debt reduced
The arrogance of officialdom should be
tempered and controlled.*

Words spoken by Cicero in 55BC.

History, aye, still repeating itself. We are still trying to progress, and we live in hope. God always gives us hope.

What causes the problems? "Events, dear boy, events." So said Harold MacMillan decades ago. Issues occur, things happen, we have to deal with them as best we can daily.

Well, onwards and upwards. Keep faith with God, he's our rock and helps us to cope through life's journey.

A Sailor's Prayer

Jackie Neilson

*Pray God Lead us,
Pray God Speed us,
From all evil defend us,
Well to fish and well to haul
And what he pleases to give us all
A fine night to land our nets
And may we do well with all we gets.
Pray God, keep us from sand and shoal
And grant that each may have fair dole.
Pray God, hear our prayer.*



As seen in St Peter's on the Quay, Minehead, Somerset. Let us give thanks when next we eat our fish and remember the daily toil of our fishermen who harvest from the sea.

Wombourne vestry news

Brenda Shuttleworth, senior steward

After the summer season when we take a break from our regular church meetings, we are beginning to pick up the threads at the beginning of another Methodist Church year.

It has felt a bit different this summer as we worshipped with friends at other churches, accommodating the needs of the preaching plan. For some this was a very positive experience, for others less so and we will need to have a conversation about that. For me it underlined the need to be rooted in a church community, to feel the support of fellowship with friends. But that fellowship cannot be a static thing, rather something which enables us all to grow in our discipleship. I was reminded of that beautiful hymn by Charles Wesley (StF 620):

*Thou God of truth and love,
we seek thy perfect way*

which goes on to ask:

*Why hast thou cast our lot
in the same age and place?*

In the coming months we may be asking that question of ourselves. At our recent synod and again at our circuit meeting we passed a resolution concerning refugees, both calling on our government to do all that it can to bring an end to the suffering of refugees coming to Europe and pledging our churches to pray and work to support refugees arriving in our community. We were reminded that we are part of the City of Sanctuary movement which works to shelter the most vulnerable in our society.

While our meetings may have been suspended during August, life has gone on with its highs and lows, its joys and sorrows affecting members of our community – this will be shared with you in the pastoral report – and we have all been called to support our friends during difficult times.

We are delighted to welcome the Revd Nadine Snyman, the incoming minister at the URC Church in Wombourne. Representatives from our church attended her induction service at the beginning of the month and we all look forward to meeting her and pray that the relationships we enjoy with her church may be strengthened in the months ahead.

Ladies' Day and harvest are upon us – the choir has been busy rehearsing for both occasions – and we look forward to sharing our harvest lunch together.

I'll close with another Charles Wesley hymn – we often sing this in January but it applies just as well to the beginning of a new Connexional year!

*Come, let us anew our journey pursue,
Roll round with the year,
And never stand still till the Master appear!*

WOMBOURNE METHODIST CHURCH

presents

Ashmore Park Choir
IN CONCERT

Friday, November 13th, 2015

at

7.30pm

Tickets £5

in aid of

Friends of Kenya's Children

and

the Church 'Ramp Access'

Project

Contact Pauline Hotchkiss by telephone

Dates for your
diary:

**Wombourne
Christmas
Fair**

**Saturday
November
21st
10am – 12
noon**



**Springdale
Christmas
Fair**

**Saturday
December 5th
12 noon –
2pm**

Can you help run the Fair Trade shop?

Brenda Shuttleworth with an urgent appeal

Wolverhampton Fair Trade is looking for volunteers to help in our shop. We are about to lose three very reliable volunteers and need to replace them if the shop is to keep open as it does now. We also want to extend our bank of volunteers so that when we move back into Darlington Street, we can work more efficiently and flexibly.

Fair trade is an integral part of the mission of our circuit and the city centre shop a witness to the community that we share a responsibility for the well-being of our global community. If you could spare half a day on a fortnightly basis, please get in touch with Brenda Shuttleworth, 01902 330002, for an initial conversation.

Springdale vestry news

James Peterson, senior steward

I finished off July's report looking forward to the Fair Trade Soiree, our first Family Fun Day and the summer Ecumenical Bible Study and they seem like such a long time ago now. The summer holidays have been and gone and many of us are already looking forward to the October half term!

By all accounts the Fair Trade Soiree was a success, and although the Just Fayre is taking a well-earned break this year, there are boxes of samples which you can order from Elaine or Brenda to take to your own groups. We'll be encouraging this in the run-up to Christmas.

The family fun day was exactly what it said on the tin. Despite ominous weather forecasts the sun decided to shine and we had the whole church family with us. We had a lot of fun doing the activities in the afternoon – a treasure hunt, making peace cranes and making some prayer bunting which has been on display in the church. We rounded off the afternoon with a very well attended outdoor service followed by a barbecue and musical entertainment.

The ecumenical bible study was a great success. We had about 15 people each week from all four churches, started with cake and then the session. We were exploring the story of Nehemiah and how it relates to our own story, including how we might work better together as churches, our own roles within the church and how we need to rely on God as our cornerstone. Each session was interactive including building our own wall and everyone enjoyed it.

I was particularly pleased to see so many of our congregation stay for a couple of baptisms which, because of scheduling commitments, we had to hold at 12.30 after our main morning worship. Hopefully these will not become a regular feature, but we showed our commitment to these families as they made baptism commitments of their own.

Family Hotpot started again in September and we welcomed a hundred people! This is definitely a record for us and congratulations are due to the team of dedicated volunteers that make it happen each month. It's no mean feat to organise the food, activities and worship and so many people here play their part – from the smallest donation of materials for the craft activities to the mammoth catering operation and leadership.

Our most recent event was the Ecumenical Service and Harvest Skittles evening which we hosted on Saturday 26th. Around 20 people enjoyed a bring and share supper followed by an evening of skittles in five teams. Once again I thank the rest of the stewards and the numerous other people at Springdale who make sure that our church stays alive and vibrant. We have had to pull together a few times this quarter when we've been faced with the unexpected, and it's a blessing to have such an unflappable and capable team.

For the garden of daily living

With thanks to Denis Campion

Plant three rows of peas:

Peas of mind
Peas of heart
Peas of soul



Plant four rows of squash:

Squash gossip
Squash indifference
Squash grumbling
Squash selfishness



Plant four rows of lettuce:

Lettuce be
Lettuce be kind
Lettuce be patient
Lettuce really love one another



Plant three rows of turnips:

Turnip for meetings
Turnip for worship
Turnip to help each other



Plant four types of thyme:

Thyme for each other
Thyme for family
Thyme for friends
Thyme for God



*Water freely with patience and cultivate with love,
and there will be much fruit in your garden, for we all
reap what we sow.*

