

## Easter Offering 2020 **Into All The World**

Each year, the Methodist Church holds an Easter Offering dedication service. This tradition dates back to 1883, when women in Manchester collected £32 for missionary work overseas from 'Christmas pennies' at family gatherings on Christmas Day

All the money raised through the Easter Offering goes to the World Mission Fund of the Methodist Church in Britain for work in our 65 Partner Churches around the world. This money is used by overseas partners to fund such work as: enabling young women in north India to undertake nurse and midwifery training and supporting Brazilian women to work in their churches with vulnerable women and children.

In 2019, collections from Easter Offering services raised over £370,000, thanks to the generosity of Methodist men, women and children.

The Easter Offering 2020 dedication service features people who have made a journey: some in obedience to God's call on their lives, and others because they had no choice. The worship encourages us to reflect and learn from those who travel, and to consider our own journeys.

**Easter Offering Dedication Service - look out for further information.**

## **Many thanks to all who sent in items this time.**

If there is something happening in your church you would like to tell people about - send details to be included on the North Cheshire Circuit website to:

[peter.sandercock@btinternet.com](mailto:peter.sandercock@btinternet.com) (until end of July)

# North Cheshire Circuit

Newsletter Number 3

***Due to Coronavirus this is a truncated version of the newsletter.***



## ***From the Superintendent Minister***

Dear friends,

### **Wilderness and Joy**

One of the 'fun' aspects of observing Lent is in pointing out to people that Sundays "don't count". [If you don't believe me, try counting the days: we know that Lent is 40 days long – remembering the 40 days Jesus spent in the wilderness – but there are more than 40 days between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday; the 'extra' days are the Sundays.] It is said that every Sunday is a remembrance of the first Easter Sunday, and so cannot be a day of fasting. So it was that I smiled yesterday over a short video clip, in which someone had been given a spectacular "chocolate bomb" for Sundays in Lent: a ball of chocolate, over which hot milk is poured; melting to release marshmallows to sit on top of a rich warm drink!

Last weekend, however, I was speaking with someone who said that in her home church Lent was hardly ever mentioned. The kind of 'serious' dedication to our faith (which we hope to show in particular during Lent) was something that people were encouraged to demonstrate throughout the year. While this is true, Lent does provide us with an opportunity to step aside from 'normal' patterns of life, in which we can take so much for granted, and to spend some time reflecting on what really matters to us.

All of these ideas have serious parallels in everyday life for us this year. As I write, plans to deal with the challenges presented by coronavirus are being explored all round the world. It is possible that over the next few weeks and months we will all have to live differently. Even the basics of life may be more complicated for us. What would the life of the church look like, for example, if it became unwise for us to gather? Across society,



**Christian Aid Week  
is 10th - 16th May 2020**

### **MHA Sunday 14th June 2020**

MHA Sunday is a celebration of all we do to enable people to live later life well, supported through church services and fundraising. This year's theme is kindness, inspired by the Old Testament story of Ruth.

We are invited to come together on 14th June along with thousands of others to make a difference. People could get involved by holding a service, having a sponsored bike ride or hosting an event such as a tea party or something more active!

More information from **[mha.org.uk](http://mha.org.uk)**

**Look out for leaflets in churches!**



**(Look out for further information)**

## Diary Dates March April & May 2020

### March

Sat 21st Easter Coffee Morning at **Bretton** 11am - 1pm  
POSTPONED  
Sun 22nd Mothering Sunday  
Sun 29th Clocks go forward

### April

Sun 5th *Palm Sunday*  
  
Thu 9th *Maundy Thursday*  
Fri 10th *Good Friday*  
Sun 12th **EASTER DAY**  
Thu 23rd *St George*

### May

Mon 4th *May Bank Holiday*  
  
Thu 21st *Ascension*  
Mon 25th *Spring Bank Holiday*  
Sun 31st *Pentecost*

### June

Tue 16th 7.30pm Circuit Meeting at Saltney  
(Look out for further information regarding this)

## A gentle reminder for churches.

The online **Property Schedule** (the Annual Church Return) is due for completion soon. If you would like some help with completing this then please let me know.  
Well done to the 11 churches who have completed this already.  
Many thanks  
Peter (Circuit Admin)

how will be able to look after those who are most vulnerable? These questions make Easter appear to be a long, long way away. How will we find joy if life looks more like a long-term Lent? Perhaps the Sundays in Lent will help us: encouraging us to remember the joy of God's resurrection power all year round. We do not believe that the power of God's grace was only at work on the first Easter Sunday, when God raised Jesus from the dead. No! We believe that the resurrection of Jesus was a sign that God can bring new life out of darkness, pain and death; and that God can – and does – do this for all time and in all people. So God is at work not only on Easter Sunday, nor only on the Sundays in Lent, but every day of the year! It is because of this that we have hope; and can find joy. This year, more than many others, we do not know what lies ahead. But let us look with confidence to God to guide us, to strengthen us and to fill us with joy again.

Ephesians 1: 17-19

*I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power.*

Yours in Christ.

**Neil**

## Welcome to Liz Barton

*North Cheshire Circuit's new Circuit Administrator (Ministers).*

Firstly, thank you to all those who I have met or spoken to since my appointment. You've all made me feel very welcome. Taking on this role I knew I would need help understanding the way Methodists 'do things' and I am expecting a rather steep learning curve! My faith journey began when I was sent to a Baptist Sunday School then at 12 we moved and I didn't really become part of a church again until my



early 20s. A friend invited me along to her 'youth group' at the local Anglican Church. I loved it, settled in with the group and became a Sunday School teacher. Then, in my early 30s, another really good friend from a drama group I was involved with invited me along to a Sunday Evening Church. To cut a long story short, I loved the freedom of the service and went along once a month. Eventually I met my future husband there and, once married, the Vineyard Church in Loughton, Essex, became my home.

We were house group leaders, helped with the youth group and also led the under 5s ministry. They were very special years. Alongside this, after 26 years working for HSBC Bank I became redundant and my Senior Pastor invited me to be his PA, which I did for seven years. Since then, my husband Peter and I have lived in Melbourne, Australia for 2½ years where we spent time with his family whilst Peter attended Bible College. On returning to the UK, I became Manager of The Christian Bookshop in Birkenhead – which has sadly just closed. I love reading and so it wasn't really a job – more a labour of love! Peter and I live on the Wirral, have an 8 month old cocker spaniel called Toby – I would say he keeps us young but I think it's more that he tires us out!!

*(It would be great if people could add Liz's email as a safe sender to avoid messages ending up in spam folders!)*

*ministersadmin@northcheshiremethodists.org.uk*

## Future of the Circuit Newsletter

This is the last edition of the Circuit Newsletter that I will be involved in. It would be great if someone (or a small team) could be persuaded to take it over on a volunteer basis.

The Circuit Newsletter is produced quarterly - or it could be seasonally. 'Publisher' is used as the program to put it together but other similar ones could be used. Each issue has 28 pages but it could be fewer.

The newsletter is something that involves all churches in our Circuit and it would be good to pass this along for the future.

As well as the newsletter church events can still be put on the circuit website & calendar. Please look at this and see if you could write about something happening in your church that can be shared with other churches and the wider world.

Best wishes Peter

## Family Film Club

In the Autumn of 2019 a new family film club started at **Helsby** Methodist Church. On a Saturday morning once a month families within the community can come and watch a film for free and enjoy a box of popcorn or two! Colouring-in sheets or simple activities are available for children who are unable to sit still throughout the film and the attendance has been good for a new venture. The films we have been showing tie in with the themes from the book 'Holy Habits' which both The Hurst and Helsby Methodist Churches are exploring. On arrival, families are given a ticket on the back of which are printed some questions for them to think about which relate to the film. 'Robots' was shown during February half term and one of the questions on the ticket read, 'The Bible says we are fearfully and wonderfully made, yet sometimes we feel like rubbish. How do we recognise we're amazing in God's eyes?' Something for us all to think about!

Cath Clarke

*Children & Family Worker at Helsby Methodist Church*

## Helsby and the Hurst Joint Sunday School

In September 2019 children from Helsby and The Hurst in Kingsley joined together at Kingsley for the first time as a joint Sunday School. This will be a monthly get together and the venue will alternate between Helsby and Kingsley plus there may be opportunities for outdoor activities in other locations such as Delamere Forest. This is the start of a new venture to help the children experience being part of a wider church family, feel encouraged that they are supported in their faith and to make new friendships, learn and have fun. It's also a good opportunity for the Sunday School leaders who work faithfully and tirelessly year after year to be encouraged and able to support each other by sharing resources and ideas. We are using the 'Holy Habits' themes that both churches are exploring and so we started by getting to know each other's games then went outside to make dough sticks on the barbeque which the children then ate. Feedback from parents and children has been very positive and we look forward to this partnership with The Hurst growing and developing.

*'It went down really well. It was a really good opportunity for both groups of kids to get together, doing some great games and activities, just what our kids need. I know the boys came away very happy. It has a great potential and hope it can continue and develop. Great work by all those involved!'*

Cath Clarke

*Children & Family Worker at Helsby Methodist Church*



## Sacred Spaces

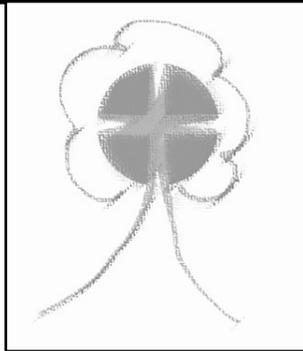
Where are *your* sacred spaces?

I am hoping to do some reflecting on sacred spaces and what they mean as special places where you meet God. Celtic Christians called them "Thin Place", those rare places where heaven and earth collide. Places where we seek God, or deeply sense God's presence.

It could be a mountain top, by a river or lake, in a forest or open farm land, anywhere. As a child I found my first sacred space on my grandparent's farm. I mentioned this in the Forest Church article in the last newsletter.

I would love to hear of your sacred spaces, if you are willing to share them and especially if they are local. As Forest Church develops they may become places for us to explore. This may also add to a larger piece of work I am hoping to explore during my first sabbatical. If you are happy for me to use your comments in either Forest Church or the sabbatical work which may become something published in some way, please let me know that as well. I look forward to seeing where heaven and earth collide for you.

Rev'd Jo Brown  
Jo.brown@methodist.org.uk  
01829 741022



## *News from Halton Trinity*

Here is the news from Trinity Methodist Church Runcorn.

Monday

Every other week our Halton Circle meets. This is an open group and we have members from our own Church, and also we welcome Ladies from the wider community. We have a variety of speakers, but we also enjoy going out to eat.

Tuesday

Tuesday at Ten, has been running for about ten years and it is open to anyone. We serve bacon rolls, toast and preserves, and both tea and coffee.

Also on a Tuesday our Singing group meets, and sings for fun. They also they put on musical afternoons for us all too. They go into local homes for the elderly and are very much appreciated.

Wednesday

The Women's Fellowship meet in the home of one of our members. They have speakers sometimes. They also have afternoon teas to which people are invited. There are delicious cakes and there is always a bring and buy stall.

Thursday

We host a 'Drop in' Centre for Asylum Seekers. This is under the umbrella of Churches together in Runcorn. We try to help them in whatever way we can by holding spoken English classes, helping with clothing, toiletries, bedding and money where necessary. A number of ladies from our Church and other Churches in our Circuit help by providing Soup and other things also. **It is a very vibrant morning, and I invite anyone from our North Cheshire Circuit to pop in any Thursday morning to see just what goes on.**

Friday

On the last Friday of the month there is CAMEO club, a luncheon club for the elderly and house-bound people within the community.

Dorothy Rigby