



# St John's News

St John's Methodist Church, Baker Street, Potters Bar EN6 2DZ  
www: stjohns.pb.org.uk email: sjnews@stjohns.pb.org.uk

Registered Charity No 1130633

## SERVICES

### Saturday 4th September

8.30am Churches Together in Potters Bar prayer meeting at St John's OR on Zoom. More details at [ctipbsecretary@gmail.com](mailto:ctipbsecretary@gmail.com)

### Sunday 5th Sept - CLIMATE SUNDAY

10.30am Morning Worship  
Rev Ali Facey

Duty Steward - Helen Jeckells

### Thursday 9th Sept - 12.30-1.30pm

Thinking Lunch at Marlborough Road Methodist Church with the Rev Inderjit Bhogal speaking on: 'The Roots of Sanctuary in St Alban: Making St Albans a City of Sanctuary.' Please bring own sandwiches & drinks.

### Sunday 12th September

10.30am Morning Worship  
Graham Phillips

Duty Steward - Dave Best

### 6.30pm Rev Nina Johnson leads our Circuit Service including

Local Preachers Recognition Service for Sylvia Kapfunde & Graham Phillips, presentation of 25 years Certificate to Chris Hancock, plus acknowledging Shenley Methodist Church becoming a class of St John's Methodist Church from 1st Sept 2021 & Rev Colin Rowe being ordained presbyter for 70 years.  
Duty Steward - Myra Sloper

### Sunday 19th Sep CREATIVE CHURCH

10.30am Informal Service in church with Rev Ali Facey plus Crafts in Rainbow Room

Duty Steward - Helen Jeckells

Followed by Church Fun Day (page 2)

### Friday 24th September

10.00am Macmillan Coffee Morning  
more information on page 3

### Sunday 26th September

10.30am Holy Communion  
Rev Ali Facey

Duty Steward - Robin Burns

### Sunday 3rd October - HARVEST

10.30am Harvest Service with Scout Parade - Rev Ali Facey  
Duty Steward - Myra Sloper

## September 2021

*From this Connexional year we are pleased to welcome the congregation at Shenley into our membership. They will continue to meet weekly at Shenley, but it is a new chapter for both of our church families as we share a single Church Council. We look forward to hearing more about them and to including them in all we do as the weeks progress.*

**T**he last 18 months have been difficult with so many restrictions put on our lives and we are grateful to Chris Humphreys for all the measures he put in place to keep us safe and prevent the transmission of Covid 19. Although on 19th July we saw the lifting of many of the restrictions, we have remained cautious in church and still ask that people wear masks when attending worship. It has been wonderful to be able to say 'Let us sing' once more and it felt quite emotional to hear people singing in church after such a long silence. Coffee will also now be served from the Clifton Room. From September onwards we are planning to start some of our special services. On 19th September we have our Creative Sunday worship followed by a BBQ at Morven. On 3rd October we have our Harvest Parade Service. Then on 10th

October we have our first Café Worship Service. Gradually we are also seeing a return of the midweek activities: Friday Morning Coffee on 3rd Sept, Jumping Johns on Monday 6th Sept and also Women's Guild on Monday 6th Sept.

The following words of the prophet Isaiah encourage us to not only consider the past but discover the new things that God is doing in the present. He says: **'Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?'** Isaiah 43:18-19.

As we begin a new church year together I hope and pray that we will be alert and able to perceive the new things that God is doing in and amongst us as a church community, and that, guided by the Holy Spirit, we will be able to discern how we should respond. **Rev Ali Facey**

## Pastoral letter from Beds, Essex & Herts District

**Dear Friends** The start of the Methodist Church year on 1 September provides a natural opportunity for circuits and churches to plan for the year ahead, as we look to the future with a mixture of hope and concern at what the autumn and winter may bring. Although the national vaccination programme has been a great success, it is unclear whether and to what extent future restrictions may still be necessary.

However, one of the most encouraging developments during the past eighteen months has been the way in which circuits and churches in the Bedfordshire, Essex and Hertfordshire District have responded to the situation posed by lockdown and the need for social distancing. Detailed risk assessments have been carried out efficiently and effectively. Sunday services have continued by electronic means whenever restrictions have prevented congregations from meeting in person. At other times, church premises have been suitably adapted to allow safe access. I am immensely grateful to all those who have worked so hard to ensure that worship, fellowship, and mission can continue.

Already there has been much theological, political, and social commentary on the present and future implications of the pandemic for corporate and individual human life on a fragile planet. Clearly, far-reaching changes are presently underway and will likely continue apace. Yet the people of God are well placed to adapt and respond to changing circumstances. Our identity in Jesus Christ gives us an overarching story and a fixed reference point in which to assess and prioritise change. Holding fast to him means we need not be anxious when familiar and apparently stable patterns of living, working, and worshipping must be reassessed in the light of changing circumstances. After all, 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever' (Hebrews 13:8).

Grace and Peace.

**David Chapman, District Chair - August 2021**

## Family Fun Day - Sunday 19th September from 12 noon

We are pleased to tell you that we have booked Morven Guide Centre The Causeway, Potters Bar EN6 5HA again for a BBQ and games afternoon with bouncy castle. This will take place after the morning service and lunch and hot drinks will be provided. The venue provides both indoor shelter and large enclosed grounds with car parking is available next door at Stormont School. Transport is available if required so please do ask one of the stewards. Do also let us know in advance if you are coming so we can cater for everyone.

*More information from Myra Sloper (01707 875846)*

## FAMILY NEWS

*We are delighted that some of the younger members of the St John's family have received exam results enabling them to move forward in their chosen paths from September. Last year was extremely challenging for all students and so we are delighted the outcomes are so positive. Luke Esdaile will commence his course at Leeds Beckett and Nicky Pari at York University. Natasha Gunning graduated from Canterbury and continues to work towards a masters in criminology. Caleb Rhodes has begun a placement as part of his aeronautical engineering degree and Lydia is taking a well deserved gap year. Abigail Best completed her degree in mental health nursing and begins full time employment at Langley Green hospital, Crawley after working throughout both lockdowns. Congratulations to Sophie Bowler and Patrick Abbey who became engaged in July and plan to get married in July 2022. With a huge amount of sorrow we learnt of the death of Roger Wright. Roger and Barbara moved to St Johns from Oakwood Methodist Church when it closed 8 years ago. Roger has worked tirelessly for the St Albans & Welwyn circuit often ably assisted by Barbara. We will always miss Roger and his ever positive outlook. Our thoughts and our prayers are with Roger's family.*

*Helen Barlow (01707 662254)  
[foodtech16@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:foodtech16@hotmail.co.uk)*

## Volunteering at Whitechapel Mission

It was 4:30 AM on Saturday the 24th of July, and I was splashing my face with water, trying to awaken my senses and refresh myself before the exciting and long day ahead. No, we weren't getting on a plane, but we were making our way to Whitechapel Mission, the homeless shelter in London that many of you will be familiar with. It was me and Luke's first time going, but mum and our last-minute addition Peter had been before.

After a slow drive through the centre of London, we were signed in and ready to go with our 'volunteer' aprons. We got to work preparing the food for the breakfast we would later serve, we had about an hour and a half until the hatch opened for food at 8am. After un-canning beans, creating cereal portions and washing up, Luke and I were given the task of serving teas, coffees and hot chocolates before breakfast.

As a result of me and Luke getting on well with the drinks, we were also at the hatch at 8am, serving full English breakfasts and shouting commands at Mum for 'a porridge with two sugars, milk and



jam please!' or 'two cornflakes with milk and sugar please!' (Peter was on egg frying duties).

Overall it was such a great experience. I would definitely do it again as I enjoyed it so much, and the people and what they do there is nothing short of amazing. I think volunteering there helps break down stereotypes of homeless people, like the tendency for people to feel scared by them, and I learnt that every story is unique.

**Bethan Esdaile**

## Harvest Festival - Sunday 3rd October

Following the write up by Bethan of their trip to serve breakfast at Whitechapel, here is our annual Harvest appeal!

The Mission has continued to be the only breakfast centre for the homeless which has been able to stay open throughout the pandemic in London. Numbers each day have varied wildly as local Councils have accommodated some of the homeless in hotels though, sadly, that has all now ended. At one stage the daily attendance was over 600 people!

Staying open has been achieved through very careful hygiene and anti-Covid-19 preparations, moving to a completely take-away breakfast in disposable containers (the containers have cost more than the breakfasts!) and by employing additional staff to replace the volunteers - which was too risky for both the Mission and the volunteers. Funding, despite the extra costs, has fortunately kept pace due to individual donations and substantial corporate donations from

companies who have historically sent staff to help with breakfasts.

For Harvest this year, it has been decided to again appeal principally for money - which provides the greatest flexibility, but for those who wish to give provisions the Mission would most appreciate tins of baked beans and/or packets of biscuits - which can be transported to Whitechapel.

Donations can be made directly to the Church bank account in the usual way, (please mark for Whitechapel) or by using a yellow Gift Aid envelope at the back of the church with any cheques made out to St John's Methodist Church. If you wish to use the Card Reader please speak to a steward, but if you pay income tax please also sign the Gift Aid declaration on a yellow envelope.

On behalf of all the Trustees at Whitechapel I would like to thank you all for your continued generosity.

**Peter Barlow**





## Macmillan Bring & Buy Coffee Morning

Come and join us for coffee & cakes and give your support to this great cause on Friday 24th Sept 10.30am - 12 noon in the Clifton Room. Donations of cakes, jams or items for the Bring & Buy stall would be greatly appreciated by *Pat Griffith (656344)*



## Church rotas - flowers & tea towels

For contributions towards the church flowers for a special date, the list for names is now on the noticeboard at the far end of the vestibule. So too is the list for monthly volunteers to launder the tea towels. Please do sign up if you can.

## Postcard from St John's

Having no planned holiday or trips for this year, I welcomed the invitation to a 2 day 'Holiday at Home' at St John's in July.

I arrived on the first morning to a warm welcome, given a name badge and an activity programme which I was able to study while enjoying a coffee and home-made biscuits. Ali welcomed 25 of us and said a prayer to begin the day.

From an option of board games or glass jar decorating, Ruth, Valerie and I chose to play scrabble, something we have not been able to play on our own. This proved a bit challenging as it was not your standard Scrabble but a party version played against a timer, supplied by Dave & Andrea Best, so we had a few laughs getting to grips with it! We then moved into church to listen to some Irish music provided by Myra Sloper, Freda Ward, Paul Guppy and Helen Jeckells (playing her lap harp which she taught herself during lockdown).

Lunch was served in the Garden Room, which had been decorated out as a 'beach café' with bunting, fishing nets, buckets and spades and seagulls. We enjoyed a delicious roast dinner and cheesecake dessert provided by Helen Barlow, Robin Burns and their team.

In the afternoon some tried knot work with Colin Smale, whereas I along with several others opted for flower arranging. Margaret Bland gave a



very interesting demonstration of constructing a table flower arrangement and we then had the opportunity to construct our own.

The next hour was spent listening to a talk by Myra on slavery with some interesting facts and one on the history of recorders. What a fascinating collection of recorders she has. Others chose to do sand art with Margaret Rhodes.

The afternoon was rounded off with tea and homemade cakes and we closed with an epilogue and prayer from Graham Philips.

The second day followed a similar pattern. I chose to join the "knit and natter" group led by Helen Strand making squares for charity, while others went to a



Pat (left photo) and Val enjoying their flower arranging

play reading session.

A session of armchair exercises was then ably led by Beth Fenner in the church and caused a few smiles. There was the option of stone decorating if you were not feeling so energetic!

Lunch at the beach café consisted of a tasty lasagne and salad, followed by Eton Mess. Quite a number of us then joined David Rhodes in the church for a quiz and learned a few facts!

John Sloper then gave a talk

on birds with some truly beautiful photos of birds captured in his garden.

Musical entertainment in the church followed with some classical piano pieces beautifully played by Chris Esdaile and some 'singalong duets' from Freda and Myra.

We rounded off the day again with tea and cakes and an epilogue and prayer from Graham.

I felt both days proved to be a welcome break and an opportunity to meet up with friends and many said how lovely it was to chat face to face as they had not had much contact with others, particularly non church members. My thanks to all involved in organising and setting it up. It was much appreciated! Booking for next year?

*Pat Griffith*



Sand bottle



Decorated glass jar

**Minister: Rev Ali Facey 01707 652978 (minister@stjohnspb.org.uk) - day off Friday**  
**Senior Steward: Myra Sloper 01707 875846 (seniorsteward@stjohnspb.org.uk)**  
**Treasurer: Rob Ward (treasurer@stjohnspb.org.uk)**  
**Lettings: Chris and Lesley Humphreys 01707 851320 (bookings@stjohnspb.org.uk)**  
**Nursery Playgroup: Celia Mills 07969 924482**  
**Copy deadline for next issue is Sunday 19th September**

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4th July 2021

## Dear Members and Friends of St John's

I was a representative from our Bedfordshire, Essex and Herts District (BEH) at the Methodist Conference this year (June 24th to July 1st 2021) and I am happy to answer any questions which you might have. I have only been a representative at Conference twice before - 1993 & 2001.

I am sure you are aware of the decision of the Conference on Wed 30th June to allow same-sex marriages to take place on Methodist Church premises. After all the necessary legal work has been undertaken by the Connexion, each Church Council is to decide if they wish same-sex marriages to take place at their church.

The discussion on our 2019 report 'God in Love Unites Us' on Wednesday morning was live on line and can be heard on the Methodist Conference website. It was conducted with good grace but a lot of pain and emotion was shared. In our area we held a total of 5 open meetings when this report was discussed - four in church buildings in Jan & Feb 2020 and one was on-line in April 2021. All were welcome to attend these gatherings.

The vote to enable same-sex marriages to take place on Methodist premises was passed by 82% of the voting members of the 2021 Conference, but there are members of the Methodist Church who will find this decision difficult. This vote took place after a full morning of discussions and was the culmination of a long process of consultation in the Methodist Church, going right back to 1992 and then the 1993 Derby Conference resolutions.

And we have been here before on different issues - Scripture was quoted as to why we should not allow marriages of divorced people in our churches and then in the discussions about ordaining women to the presbyteral ministry. We all use Scripture differently but that does not mean we do not all take it seriously.

We are not the first Christian denomination in the UK to make this decision: The United Reformed Church, the Scottish Episcopal Church, and the Quakers have all made this decision before us. Individual Baptist Churches already conduct same-sex marriages (they are not governed in the same way as we are, so each church makes their own decision). However, we are the largest denomination thus far to have made this decision. The Church of England is currently involved in a similar journey to the Methodist Church's God in Love Unites Us process. Their process is called Living in Love and Faith.

However we need to recognise that there will be pain, as well as joy, in our Methodist Connexion over this decision and the matter needs to be handled

sensitively, so that we can continue to travel together - living with contradictory convictions, as we do in so many areas of our lives already. Indeed, as we have, as a country, had to live with the

consequences of those who held different views on the European Referendum in June 2016. Many of these views were also held very strongly and we live with that pain and division still.

The Rev Sonia Hicks, President of the Methodist Conference, said: 'The debate today and our wider conversation has been conducted with grace and mutual respect. As we move forward together after this historic day for our Church, we must remember to continue to

hold each other in prayer, and to support each other respecting our differences.'

So I end my pastoral letter to you all asking for us all to do as Sonia indicates. The World gives two messages: either we all become the same or else we obliterate or alienate those who are different from ourselves. The Church needs to show an alternative message to the world: we can be painfully different and still live together in love and respect. As Christians we acknowledge that we are born into a divided Church

and we are called to grow in understanding with those who are different from us, respecting and loving one another. Jesus did not command us to love only those who think like us. The command to love is universal.

**Rev Rosemary Fletcher**  
(01727 857826) **Superintendent of St Albans and Welwyn Methodist Circuit**

