

CONTACT

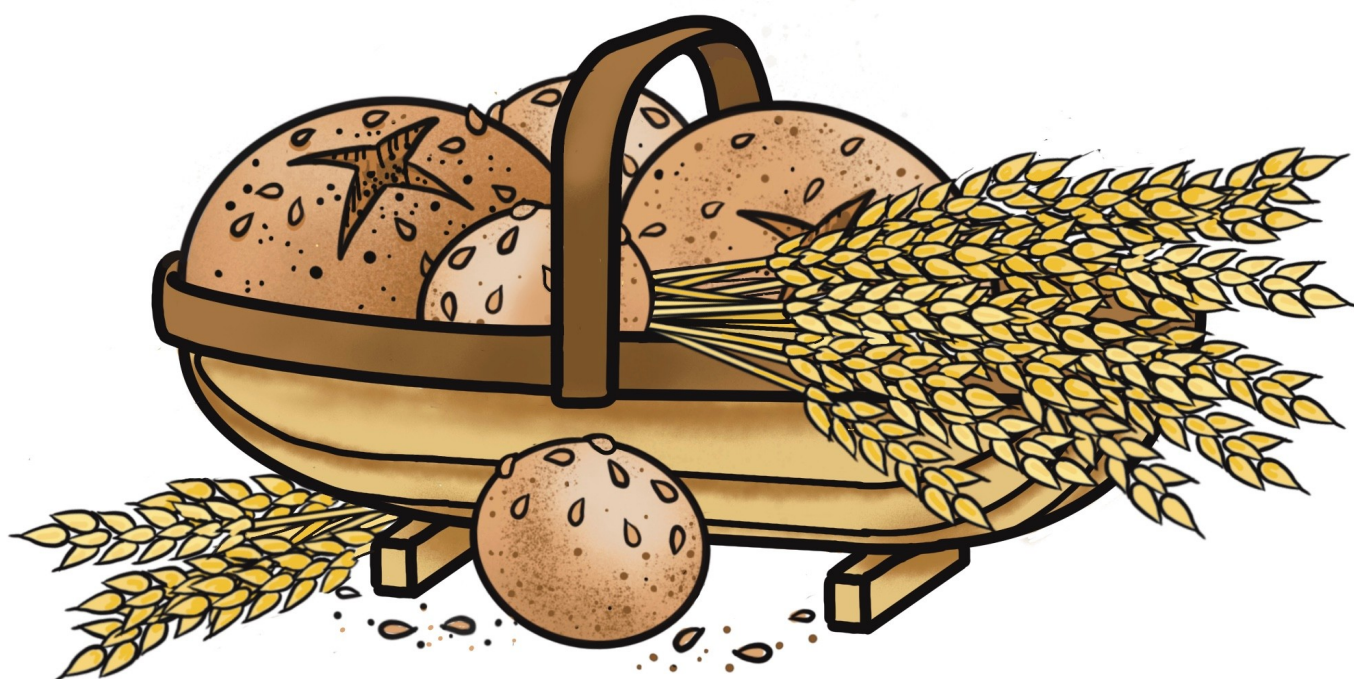
Prince of Peace
The Most High God
The LORD is peace
Father Son Holy Spirit
The LORD who provides
The God of Eternity
Wonderful Counsellor
THE ANCIENT OF DAYS
The LORD of hosts

Magazine of Erdington Methodist Church
Station Road - September 2024

GROWING GOD'S KINGDOM IN ERDINGTON, THROUGH WORSHIP,
PRAYER, ACTION AND FRIENDSHIP

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And whatever you do!

In the church today we sometimes assume that discipleship is more about the sacred part of our life, rather than the secular as well.

Are we aware of what God is doing in our school, workplace, with friends and family, on our street or in our leisure time? Whole life disciples spend every day with an awareness of the presence of Jesus in their lives. As the apostle Paul writes

'And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.'

(Colossians 3:17)

SO – we do ordinary things in the name or character of Jesus, i.e. acting in the same way that Jesus would do if He were in our place.

It's helpful to think in terms of frontlines, the places where we spend most of our week:

Everyone has a frontline: young or old, working or not, sick or well. This could be our workplace, home, college, community or club.

This is where God has called us! God is at work on our frontline to shape and use us, making it a place where we can grow as a disciple and make a difference to those around.

As churches we need to be committed to helping each other see the significance of our frontlines in God's purposes. Are we supporting one another, especially in prayer?

As one teacher put it:

"I spend an hour a week teaching Sunday school and they haul me up to the front of the church to pray for me. The rest of the week I'm a full-time teacher and the church has never prayed for me. That says it all."

With less than 6% of the UK population now going to church, God wants to use us as salt and light wherever we spend time.

Christians are exactly where they need to be to serve Him, so that others might see what a disciple of Jesus looks like, as we grow as disciples ourselves.

Paul Hardingham - Parish Pump

Macmillan Coffee Morning

Jacky Scott will be hosting our annual Macmillan Coffee Morning on Saturday 21st September and will have an array of homemade cakes for sale, as well as a tombola and drinks/toast available from the kitchen.

Any donations for either the tombola or cake stall will be gratefully received, please leave any items for the tombola with Tram, and I will collect beforehand. Any cake donations, please bring on the day. If you can add to your diary, and we look forward to welcoming you in raising money for this fantastic charity that does so much for people with Cancer. Many thanks

Jacky

Common Cause 2024 – UPDATE

Home Leone – Building new, sustainable villages and communities in Sierra Leone

What a wonderful afternoon was had at the Garden Party on 17th August, at Jan's home. The weather remained dry and so many people turned out to support the event. Thank you to all who came along, to those who offered donations even though they were unable to attend and to Jan for hosting the event.

An incredible £271.52 was raised bringing our running total to £517.33.

It is important to let you know that we have already sent some of the money raised to Homeleone following an urgent appeal from Clive Thursfield, who is on the Board of Trustees. He alerted us to the fact that severe weather in Sierra Leone has caused damaged worth thousands of pounds in Destiny village and has displaced about 50 people. Money was urgently requested to put towards the repairs in order to get families back in to their homes.

Our next event will be at the Harvest Supper when there will be a quiz night with jacket potatoes and cake. This will be on Saturday 28th September. Please see the poster in Contact giving the details.

Christine Rossiter

More information from the Homeleone website.

Businesses, Employment and Livelihood

Home Leone has allocated a significant portion of land to support livelihood development and increase resilience. This supports community cash flow. The Sierra Leone business environment is not straight forward. Investors typically require high ROI's, as reflected by the countries interest rates and lack of investment.

Our concept empowers residents away from the model of dependency, enabling training and business development to act as a way to empower them to thrive and build their own lives in a holistic, sustainable manner.

We built the first 10 business units, shops, stores and generator room and brought in significant tooling to help us deliver the next phase.

The businesses we know will work and are building business plans for are:

- A construction arm where we build homes, schools and other buildings for third parties.
- A brick making factory. This started production in June 2017 and we have made nearly 1 million bricks using clay from our land.
- A garage – This was established and for years served Freetown providing quality work. The facilities remain in place as we re-engineer this to a future of developing garage mechanics training.
- A water bagging factory sells essential filtered clean water
- A bakery is ready to start operations.

- We have fully operational and developing wood and metal fabrications workshops
- A Village Market offers opportunity for trading

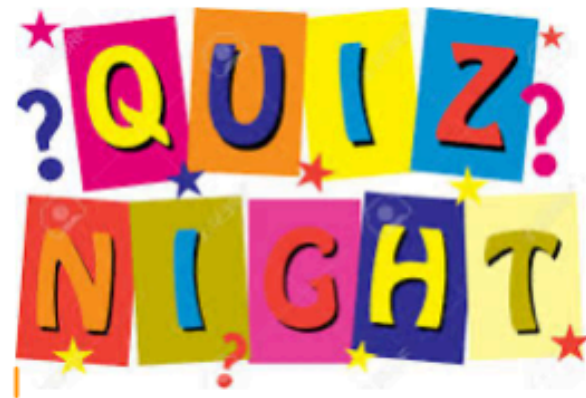
In addition, we are developing plans for

- A Passion Fruit Farm.
- A care home for the elderly and vulnerable adults.
- A plastics recycling factory.

As things develop, we will seek larger and more added-value business opportunities.



...I take it our local supermarket has a rather good offer on tinned peas at the moment!



Saturday 28th September 2024

ERDINGTON METHODIST CHURCH

7.15pm for prompt 7.30pm start

£5per person inc: jacket potato and cake



Teams of 6 maximum.

Raising funds for our Common Cause

'Homeleone'

Tickets: Please speak to Christine or

Email: christine.rankin@btopenworld.com

Refugees

Recently we had Chatty Church and because it was the end of Refugee Week, this was the theme chosen for the service. It was powerful stuff, especially given that there were some in the congregation, as you would expect at such a service, who only have tenuous links with our church.

One of the chats that we were directed to, was a discussion of the poem 'Home' by Warsan Shire. If this hasn't already been added to the GCSE English curriculum it certainly deserves to be.

I suggest you do a google search if you want to see the whole thing = there is a video too on Youtube

Presumably this poem represents the working out in words of her experiences as a refugee escaping from Somalia. We had a brief discussion about whether we should feel sympathy or empathy for refugees. The words towards the end of the poem direct you towards empathy, because in reality nothing else is good enough.

*You have to understand,
that no one puts their child in a boat
unless the water is safer than the land
no one leaves home until home is a sweaty
voice in your ear saying - leave,
run away from me now
I don't know what I've become
but I know that anywhere
is safer than here.*

The service concluded with a blessing which I thought was worth setting out in full.

*May God bless you with discomfort
at easy answers, half-truths and superficial relationships,
so that you may love deep within your hearts.*

*May God bless you with anger
at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people,
so that you may work for justice, freedom and peace.*

*May God bless you with tears
to shed for those who suffer pain, rejection, hunger and war,
so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and turn their pain
to joy.*

*And may God bless you with enough foolishness
to believe that you can make a difference in the world,
so that you can do what others claim cannot be done
to bring justice and kindness to all our children and the poor.*

But all of this doesn't necessarily apply only to people trying to find sanctuary elsewhere. Apparently at the present time there are approximately 36 million refugees but 96 million people displaced within their own country, and therefore have slight chance of returning home sometime, think Ukraine, Gaza and Yemen.

It can also include people closer to home who for whatever reason find that their home is no longer welcoming. Like the 66 year-old lady reported on the BBC news feed this week whose home in East

Anglia had been sold and she is now sofa surfing, because of her inability to find somewhere else to live.

Sympathy or empathy?

Peter Farley

Harvest Festival

Our Harvest Festival Celebration this year will be on the last Sunday in September - 29th. Worship will be led by Bill Topping.

Usual arrangements apply for gifts and a Harvest Collection for the Foodbank.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Bible sense

Being married to a woman who knows her Bible well can have its drawbacks. When a man protested to his wife that wiping dishes was not a man's job, his wife replied simply:

"2 Kings 21:13"

and handed him a tea towel. Later he looked it up: "And I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down."

Walking is a great way to exercise

You may be young or old, working endless hours, or retired. But there is one exercise you can still undertake almost anywhere, for however long or short a time: walking.

According to health specialists, the simple act of walking “ticks so many boxes – improving our brain, mental and musculoskeletal fitness, as well as our physical fitness.”

Here are five reasons why:

Walking raises your heart rate and makes you breathe faster. It gives you the benefit of a moderate aerobic workout – without the stress on your joints. As for your blood sugar levels, consider this: after a meal your blood sugar level rises and your pancreas releases insulin to bring it down. But even a five-minute walk can help by blunting the spike in blood sugar. Try and keep your pace brisk – aim for 100 to 130 steps a minute.

Walking improves your bone density. Walking briskly engages the muscles along the back side of your body – the glutes, hamstrings and calves. They in turn put a bit of pull on your bones, which stimulates your bones to produce osteoblasts, which improves your bone density and reduces your risk of osteoporosis.

Walking improves your mood. It stimulates your parasympathetic nervous system (nerves that relax the body during stress) and stimulates your amygdala (that part of you which controls your emotions). And if you can walk near water (rivers, coast, in the

rain) you get exposed to negative ions in the air. These electrically charged molecules are excellent for your mental health.

Walking helps your brain. You will sleep better, and your brain will be in better shape for memory and cognition. Walking also stimulates creative thinking – studies have found walking is a great time for problem-solving.

Walking helps your body shape. An instant way to look younger is to stand tall. So walk with your head up, shoulders back, and lengthen your back, to stand up straighter. And with firmer muscles, your overall body shape will improve, which in turn will boost your confidence!

From the Parish Pump Website

Having heard all these benefits why not join our regular rambling group on the first Saturday of each month. We normally meet at 10am at church. There is more information on the church noticeboards or speak to Nick Riley. - ed



Safeguarding at Erdington Methodist

This is an 'early warning' to keep the date free!

Saturday, 12th October 2024

Rev Emily will lead a

'Creating Safer Space' Foundation Module Training Course
here at Erdington from 9.00 am to 1.00 pm

Who is 'required' to attend?

Church Stewards

Pastoral Contacts

Worship Leaders

Anyone who works with children or young people in the name of
the church

Anyone who works with adults who might be vulnerable in the
name of the church

Who is 'warmly invited'?

Everybody else!

Cucumber

A small boy asked his mother for a cucumber to take to Junior Church. A slightly puzzled mother complied. Later she asked what it had been used for. "Sorry, mum," he confessed. "I got it wrong. We were supposed to bring a newcomer."

How are you? I hope you are well?

Everyone with me sends you greetings. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Titus 3:15

I sometimes receive emails from complete strangers who ask me how I am, and sometimes they add that they hope I am well. The person adds a '?' although it is not a question (and I suspect they are not at all interested in my well-being, but in my money!)

'How are you?' is normally just a way of saying 'hello'. No-one really wants an answer and definitely not a long, detailed answer! It is curious that we sometimes start a conversation with a question we do not want answered, and other times when we do want to know how a person is, we never quite get through to them.

It is easier to say, "Yes, fine thanks, how are you?" - when we are not fine. Or we can throw the question straight back: "I am ok, what about you?." But sometimes we all need to be able to say, "I am not doing ok. I need to talk," when we need to have someone to talk to.

I like it that nowadays you can say a key phrase that sounds out a distress call. For example, victims of abuse can ask "Is so and so in?", in a pub or café and the staff will immediately know that that person needs help. There is also a silent hand signal that people in trouble can give, to alert others that they are in danger. This is also excellent, and may have saved many lives.

Perhaps in church we also need a way of being honest in our replies, whether it is: “I am not doing well and I want to have a rant” or “I am worried but I am not ready to chat now”.

Anyway, how are you? Do tell.

David Pickup from Parish Pump

Harvest Field

All around, confusion,
All around, helplessness,
People lost in the bad news of every day.
Longing for purpose,
Searching for security and significance
Here in the white field of our generation.
The harvest is still great,
The workers are still few,
But the Lord of the harvest
Is the same
Yesterday, today and forever,
And this is His field.
He planted, He will give growth
If we will be His workforce
And go out into the field – where He already is –
To gather the harvest
Of His kingdom compassion.
Lord of the harvest,
In Your grace, we pray,
Send us.

By Daphne Kitching

Faithful to Scripture, Faithful to Science

Alister McGrath is well-known as a theologian, but he started out as a scientist. After becoming a Christian as a student, he wanted to learn about his new faith, so he studied theology at the same time as completing his PhD in molecular biophysics. He has not lost touch with science, but has continued to write and speak about how science and Christian faith work together. In this extract from a recently released interview, he shares his experience of being a scientist and a Christian.

“I think my most vivid experience of wonder took place in the 1970s when I was on vacation in Iran. We were travelling on a bus in the middle of the night because it wasn’t hot then, and the bus broke down. We found ourselves in the middle of this solemn black desert, and the night sky shone with a brilliance like I had never seen before. That just overwhelmed me, it made me think there is something really wonderful here.

Now, I was a Christian by that time and I knew how Christianity could answer that but it just struck me, that sense of wonder has two possible outcomes. One is science – this universe is wonderful, what’s it all about? But of course, it is also about religion, the deeper levels of things that science can’t really engage. I think one of the things I have discovered over time is that maybe this sense of wonder both opens the gateway to science and to faith, and that those two together are able to answer questions which on their own they simply couldn’t.

I think science is wonderful at asking questions. Some of those questions can be answered, but very often when you do answer

them, they simply open up yet more questions. But of course, there are some more fundamental questions I think science simply cannot answer – they transcend its capacities to answer, and you might think of non-empirical questions like, ‘Why am I here? What is the meaning of life? What is good and how do I live a good life?’

These are real questions and they’re good questions but they’re not scientific questions. And the psychologists tell us that we really need answers to those questions if we are to lead a fulfilled human existence. You find some scientists who say, ‘Well because science can’t answer them there are no answers to be given’, but actually most realise that there are answers waiting to be discovered – it’s just that science can’t deliver them.

Science fills in part of a big picture but there are parts of the picture you have to fill in from somewhere else. Science is part of the answer but only part, and faith supplements it, giving us a vision of life that is exciting and reliable, and also something that we can inhabit meaningfully.”

Find more on wondersofthelivingworld.org

Welcome

There will be a welcome service for our new Circuit Staff, Rev Nick Jones and Deacon Jenny Parnell at Witton Methodist Church on Tuesday 3rd September at 7.00 pm

All are welcome

Prayer for September 2024

Lord, here we are in September – a beautiful month at the end of the summer, but before the autumn has taken hold. A month of excitement and new starts for many, a month when courage is needed for our children and young people.

And Lord we pray for courage, compassion and integrity for our new Prime Minister and our new government. We pray for justice and peace in our country and in the world.

Help us Lord, to know that you are Lord of September; you are Lord and giver of every new month, every new day, every new minute. Help us to put our trust in you for our adventures and for our mundane everyday routines.

You are our generous, loving Father and promise that you will never leave us or forsake us when we trust in you, through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

Amen.

By Daphne Kitching



Worship – September 2024

All worship at 10.30 am unless indicated otherwise

1st - Lin Crowe

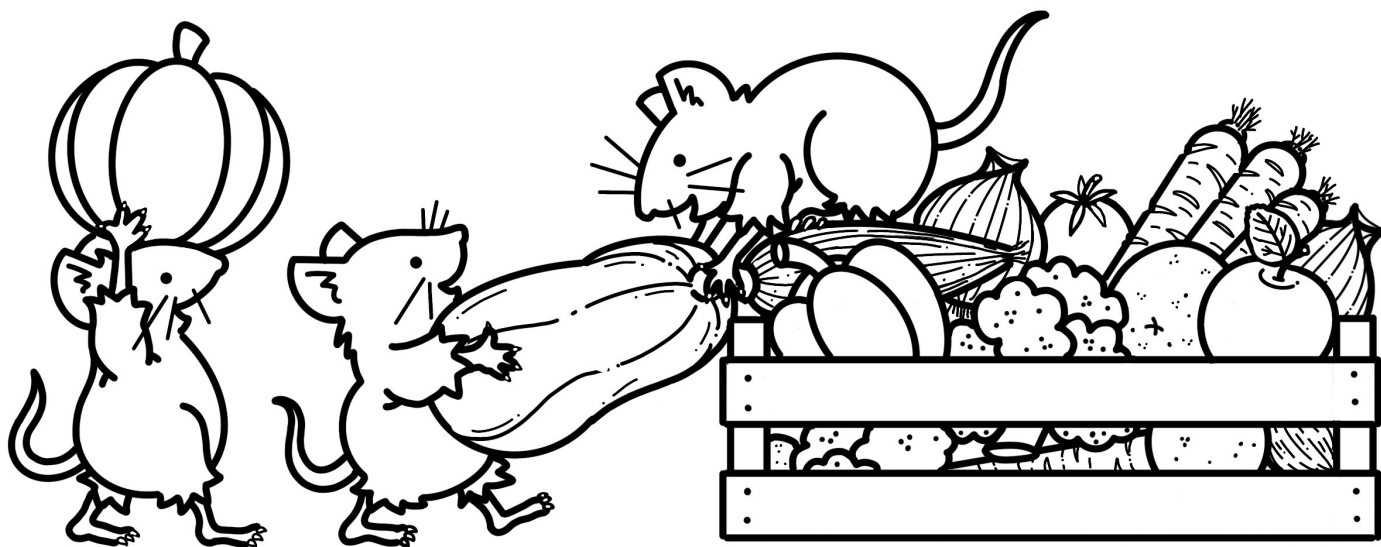
3rd - Welcome Service for Rev Nick Jones and Deacon Jenny Parnell - Witton Methodist Church - 7.00 pm

8th - LOCAL ARRANGEMENT

15th - Kirsten Newman

22nd - HOLY COMMUNION - Rev Emily Young

29th - HARVEST FESTIVAL - Bill Topping



Please hand any items for the October CONTACT to me - Nick Riley by 21st September 2024 at the latest please, or alternatively email me: spligosh@icloud.com with the words 'CONTACT MAG' in the title.