

A Place for All



The Daily Prayer Handbook of the
Chester & Stoke-on-Trent
Methodist District

2021-2022

DAY 1

Chair of District: Revd Helen Kirk

Let us build a house where love can dwell,
and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell
how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,
rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Lord of time and space whose faithfulness spans every generation, we give you thanks for the lives of women and men who have shared their faith, spoken up against injustice, broken down barriers that divide and worked for peace and reconciliation. Remind us again of who we are and who we are called to be, a community of Christ in which all are known as children of God.

Let us build a house where prophets speak,
and words are strong and true,
where all God's children dare to seek
to dream God's reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness
and a symbol of God's grace;
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Lord of creation and hope, who by the spirit inspires and challenges us so that we can never settle for what we know but reach for what we cannot yet grasp. Forgive us when we stay in the places of safety, when we believe we have heard all there is to hear and know all you have to offer. Give us the courage to be open to the prompting of your Spirit in unfamiliar voices. Give us the audacity to trust that your longing for your world is greater than anything we can imagine.

Let us build a house where love is found
in water, wine and wheat:
a banquet hall on holy ground
where peace and justice meet.
Here the love of God, through Jesus,
is revealed in time and space;
As we share in Christ the feast that frees us:
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Continued...

Lord of the outcast and the stranger who prepares a banquet for those who never expect a seat at the table. We pray that we might have eyes to see not only the power that we hold but the people who are missing from our table. Help to ask the painful questions that we may learn from those who feel they have no place within your church.

Let us build a house where hands will reach
beyond the wood and stone
to heal, to strengthen, serve and teach,
and live the Word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger
bear the image of God's face;
let us bring an end to fear and danger:
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Lord of love and grace who longs for the whole of your creation as a parent longs for a prodigal child. We are thankful that in you there is always a welcome and that no-one is beyond your love. As we seek ways to look beyond the walls of our churches, give us the grace to listen to our communities, to be present in the margins of society and to be attentive to experiences that are not our own.

Let us build a house where all are named,
their songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed
as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter,
Prayers of faith and songs of grace,
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Incarnate God, remind us that the church to which we belong is not ours but yours; challenge us with your call to radical generosity that we may embody your unconditional love. Lift our heads that we may see your spirit at work around us and be inspired. Give us confidence that the faith we bear is enough. Amen.

Singing the Faith 409
Songwriter: Marty Haugen

DAY 2

Superintendent

Revd J. Neil Stacey

Ministers

Revd David Bintliff
Revd Jo Brown
Deacon Tim Coleman
Revd Alison Crookes
Revd Andrew Emison
Revd David Goodwin

Revd Susan Banks

(C of E)

Revd Mark Elder (Baptist)

Revd Lisa McInnes

(C of E)

Supernumeraries

Deacon John Clarke
Revd David Copley
Revd D. George Evans
Revd D. Graham Evans
Revd Ralph Fennell
Deacon David Gallimore
Deacon Lynda Gallimore
Revd Anne Gibson
Revd Claire Heald
Revd Christine Jones
Revd Dr Tim Macquiban
Revd Ian Rigby
Revd Paul Taylor
Revd Martin Wood

Lay Workers

Under 30s Worker:

Dean Lawson

Administration:

Liz Barton

Heather Oulton

North Cheshire (11/1) (1)

The North Cheshire Circuit is a family of 24 congregations (together with two in MHA homes) with a mission in a wide range of contexts.

The north of the Circuit lies along the M56 motorway, stretching from the city of Chester to the town of Runcorn, with the larger villages of Helsby and Frodsham in-between.

In north-east Wales we have congregations at Saltney and Bretton. Further south the Circuit encircles Delamere Forest.

Give thanks for:

- new ways of being together and working in collaboration over the last year;
- God's sustaining provision during very difficult times, enabling mission and fellowship to continue in different ways;
- the care that church members and friends are offering to each other;
- continuing work with Foodbanks and other organisations offering help to those in need.

"Praise the Lord, all you nations!

Extol him, all you peoples!

For great is his steadfast love towards us,

And the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever.

Praise the Lord!

(Psalm 117)

DAY 3

North Cheshire (11/1) (2)

Gracious God, the whole cosmos is the work of your hands. Its care you place into our hands.

Please pray for:

- discernment over the shape of worship and mission opportunities for the future as we move forward;
- wisdom in the administration of our buildings and finances;
- new and existing initiatives that enable us to connect with our local communities:
 - the Sanctuary Chaplaincy space in Shopping City, Runcorn;
 - the Drop-In at Helsby;
 - the continued development of Forest Church;
 - the work with under 30's in the Frodsham area;
 - other opportunities being explored across the Circuit.
- willingness to work as an inclusive welcoming Church.

At the start of the pandemic there was an increased awareness of creation around us as people took the time to stop, stare and listen.

As the world starts to move again, we are called not to lose sight of this.

The Methodist Way of Life reminds us that we are called in service to care for creation and all God's gifts.

Gracious God, the whole cosmos is the work of Your hands. Its care You place into our hands.

Give us the eyes to see and the ears to hear the wonders of Your creation.

Give us the eyes to see and the ears to hear the groans of this planet.

Give us the eyes to see and the ears to hear the call for more sustainable ways of living.

Give us the eyes to see and the ears to hear Your invitation to be stewards who act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with You.

Amen.

DAY 4

Superintendent

Revd Chris Pritchard

Ministers

Revd Frances Ballantyne

Deacon Shirley Hassall

Revd Harold Stuteley

Revd Phil Bishop (CofE)

Revd Alma Fritchley (URC)

Revd Neal Stanton (Zac's
House Kingdom Community)

Revd Paul Withington (CofE)

Supernumeraries

Revd Pat A. Billsborrow

Revd Paul R.J. Cieka

Revd Dr Andrew E. Pratt

Volunteer Lay Pastoral Worker

Kathryn Craig

Mid-Cheshire (11/4)

The Circuit is at the very heart of Cheshire. It covers the towns of Northwich and Winsford and a number of villages. Agriculture is still important in the area as is light industry and distribution. The area is growing because of the excellent transport links to Manchester, Liverpool, and Chester to which many people commute. The Circuit comprises 15 churches in rural, suburban and urban settings including an Anglican / Methodist LEP and a Methodist / URC LEP. The Circuit works closely with Knutsford Methodist Church (in the neighbouring Circuit) which is planting Zac's House Kingdom Community in Northwich Town Centre.

Give thanks for:

- the popular Circuit Zoom services that have helped keep the Circuit together during the Covid-19 pandemic;
- the ongoing work of Zac's House Kingdom Community which despite lockdown has continued to build a new worshipping congregation in Northwich.

Please pray for:

- the churches of the Circuit as we emerge from the pandemic, especially that they will seek opportunities for mission and evangelism;
- the work taking place at the Northwich Methodist Outreach Centre (a circuit project in a former church in the Town Centre) and the growing partnership with Zac's House;
- the complicate sale of some circuit property.

Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer,

God of all people and places,

we are grateful that You have created

each and every one of us in Your image.

We pray that the local churches will be

a place of welcome for all Your people.

*Help us invite those who are not yet part of
our community to discover Your saving love
and find a safe place with us.*

*We pray in the name of the Holy Trinity,
our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.*

Amen.

DAY 5

Superintendent

Revd Yvonne Pearson

Ministers

Revd Anne Coates

Revd Nic Langton-Miller

Revd Tim Simms

Supernumeraries

Revd Dr Keith Davies

Revd Margaret Eaton

Revd Andrew Lindley

Revd Dr Philip Lockett

Revd Pat Percival

Lay Workers

Margaret Quine

Becky Taylor

Julia Tomes

Dane & Trent (11/5)

The Dane and Trent Circuit covers parts of Cheshire East and North Staffordshire.

It is a very picturesque part of the country bordering Staffordshire Moorlands and the Peak District National Park, and sits nicely in the centre of the "Cheshire Ring" canal waterway. Our Churches are found in town centre and rural settings in our communities. Although we still face the challenges that the Covid-19 pandemic has brought with it, we are exploring new opportunities. We are listening closely to what God is saying to us and discerning what and where we might need to change. This is an exciting time to be Church as we watch, wait and wonder how God will shape us for the future.

Give thanks for:

- the support that has been given across the Circuit in this challenging time of Covid and how we are looking to move forward together;
- Lay and Ordained ministry that is offered both paid and voluntary from members across the Circuit;
- the Circuit intentionally seeking God's guidance to enable us to see where and how we need to change;
- the prayerful encouragers in the Circuit;
- the pastoral care offered within the life of our churches and communities.

Continued...

Please pray for:

- all in the Dane and Trent Circuit who bring their gifts and share them;
- the Vision for creative new Lay Employment focused on evangelism and growth;
- the vision and courage to face the changes God is seeking us to make over the next year;
- the Revd Tim Simms and his wife Pauline as they settle into the Circuit with us;
- the enabling gift of the Spirit to work in people's lives across the Circuit.

Lord, You have been with us through the thick and thin of the challenging time of the Covid Pandemic.

Lead us forward, shaping us to Your liking. Help us to hear what it is You want us to do, guide us through a time of change and equip us to be the church for today.

Fill us with Your Spirit and help us to be brave and courageous just as the disciples were after they were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Enable us to be Your church with a focus on evangelism and growth, both numerically and spiritually.

Encourage us to grow in our discipleship and mission, making more disciples, baptising them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Challenge us to step out in faith when You call us to change and not to be afraid of all things new.

Give us the courage to be gossipers of the Gospel and Living Communion broken and shared in community.

Bless all who You call and who offer their lives in Your service.

In the name of Christ, Amen.

DAY 6

The Ecumenical Landscape: Cheshire

Ministry: Revd Pat Billsborrow

A year has passed and what a strange year it has been, not just in day-to-day experiences but also in our Ecumenical life within this part of the District. Just before lockdown occurred we not only welcomed Charlotte Truman as our new County Ecumenical Officer, but there were changes in the Church leadership team across the board with changes in both the Anglican Church and the United Reformed Church appointing a new Bishop in the first case and a new Moderator in the latter, changes which are continuing as I write. This has meant that many of the familiar connections which had been part of our lives for so long have been broken, but that has not meant that the work has not continued. In the autumn, as a group, the Ecumenical Officers arranged to highlight some of the work going on in our area by making a video combining much of the work, especially that which related to outreach from the church helping the less privileged in our society. We were very grateful to Father Paul whose connections made this possible. The video was distributed around the Churches Together groups in the County for sharing with their churches and was well received. As Officers we have continued to meet and share our concerns via zoom and other methods and had our first face-to-face meeting in May when we prayed together and picnicked, getting to know one or two new people in the process. We are looking forward to the time when we can all meet as a Christian community in the Cathedral once more, and have put a date in the diary hoping that it will take place. In the meantime we continue to work across boundaries both spiritually and practically in the name of Jesus.

Give thanks for:

- Charlotte for her challenges and encouragement in the work we see to do and all of those seeking to work across human boundaries to do the work of Christ;
- The Chaplains, especially those in hospitals during these difficult times, asking for strength to cope with the darkness and enable them to look to the light;
- All those who see opportunities for greater unity through these dark times and seek to follow the instruction in John's gospel "they shall be one and I and my Father are one".

As we come we pray that all those who have heard the call of Jesus should continue to follow in his way and take heed of his commandments of Love, Love of God overall then of our neighbours whoever they might be, and then be prepared to love ourselves, made as we are in God's image. Amen.

DAY 7

The Ecumenical Landscape: Staffordshire

Ministry: Revd Margaret Eaton

During this year the County Ecumenical Mission officer, Robert Mountford, has continued to work extremely hard alongside the various ecumenical partnerships to make more links with other community agencies in our area. He covers part of the Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury District, part of the Nottingham and Derby District and part of the Birmingham District as well as the southern part of our District.

We pray for:

- Robert as he continues to lead us in looking at the work we are able to do together, especially making links with Christian congregations and Fellowships who are not part of the longer established denominations, so that together we can share the Good News of Jesus Christ in our localities, bringing a range of styles in our worship, but being open to all who seek to know more about God;
- the work of all the chaplains in our area, including:
- the work of the chaplaincy team at Keele University as they walk alongside the students in times of difficulty, and also encourage the students to come closer to God and to be able to share their faith with others. May all students know that the chaplains are there for them wherever they are in their relationship with God;
- the work of chaplains at University Hospital of North Staffordshire as they minister at times of great need to all patients, relatives and staff, making a difference at the darkest of times;
- links with community groups, that together we may be people seeking to bring help for those in hardship and need;
- the continuing work of those who serve in running the foodbanks, and for those caring for the homeless and the work of the No. 11 project;
- a wider vision in order to discover ways to welcome and meet some of the basic needs of those who have come from other lands due to violence and lack of resources in their native countries. May we be a people seeking after justice and peace for all who suffer abuse and exploitation in our area.

Loving Lord, remind us that we are all Your family. Help us to stay close to You, and to learn from You, so that we will never let others down through a lack of care. Help us to find a way through any differences which could divide, so that together we can work to share the Gospel in all that we do and say. Amen.

DAY 8

Cheshire South (11/8) (1)

Superintendent

Revd Rob Hilton

Ministers

Revd Donna-Marie

Broadbent-Kelly

Revd Sara Butcher

Revd Robin Fox

Deacon Jill Henderson

Revd Jeremy Tresise

Revd Simon Sutcliffe

(Connexional Team)

Supernumeraries

Revd Brian Acty (URC)

Revd Jenny Arthurs

Revd Christopher Denney

Revd Ian Duffy

Revd Andrew Gunstone

Revd Jennie Henshall

Revd Eric Kirkman (URC)

Revd Margaret Lockwood

Revd Charlotte Lorimer

Revd Malcolm Lorimer

Revd Will Morrey

Revd James Needham

Revd Michael Parrott

Revd Dr Graham Patrick

Revd J. Stuart Rhodes

Revd Gordon Ryder

Revd Helen Stubbs

Revd Carol Vessey

Revd David Westhead

The Cheshire South Circuit covers the south and west of the county including the diverse towns of Alsager, Audlem, Crewe, Nantwich, Sandbach, Whitchurch and many rural villages. Our circuit is criss-crossed by railways and canals as well as roads. There are deprived areas and wealthy communities, asylum seekers and established local families. We are trying to concentrate on Mission, and have focused on bold and courageous plans during the pandemic to encourage the green shoots of hope, diversity, and evolving church life. We are well served by a robust and resilient Leadership team, and faithful church members who seek support and strong leadership from lay workers, and local lay leaders, ministers, and stewards.

Give thanks for:

- a growing understanding, and bedding in, of our Circuit vision - a Faithful and Fruitful Future;
- our Mission in Love Unites Us webinars that have inspired people to think missionally at every level. Some exciting changes have been planned during lockdown;
- new discoveries during the pandemic include more housebound members feeling included through receiving printed service sheets at home, and access to YouTube, Zoom, and telephone conference worship;
- those churches that have been honest to face the fact that their mission is nearly complete;
- a renowned sense of community and inclusion at The Haven coffee shop, North Street Crewe. A Fresh Expression that's celebrated its fifth birthday, weathered the pandemic and finds new people with a sense of belonging, hope, and community;
- Church4All: a new outreach from Ettiley Heath in Sandbach;
- bedtime stories on Zoom at Broomhall and Sound;
- a new preacher who heard the call to preach during lockdown.

DAY 9

Cheshire South (11/8) (2)

Lay Workers

Heather Staniland
Kathryn Davies
Sally Graham
Elizabeth Morris
Jonathan Newbould
Stephen Parker-Aiken
Andy Townsend

Administrators:

Daniel Keen
Jo Reeves

Lay Leaders

Jayne Bunn
Jean Ellershaw
Adam Meredith
Ruth Meredith
Roger Millns
Alan Pimlott
Michael Wright

Please pray for:

- our Leadership team being re-formed with two new stewards and two new ministers;
- probationer minister Revd Sarah Butcher settling in;
- the Circuit receiving the outcome of a District Mission Review to re-think the future of Methodism in Crewe;
- the Crewe Churches responding and looking to the future;
- the newly-formed Unity Methodist Church in Sandbach, one church on three sites, developing a new leadership team and vision;
- two team members on the Connexional Transformational Leadership Course bringing the fruits of their studies;
- the Light Works Project engaging rural communities in woodworking skills and networking;
- those who have suffered loss, trauma, and fear over the last year and continue to journey in grief, sadness and anxiety.

God of history, ancient and recent, present and future, speak from our midst - and give us ears to hear You, minds that can together discern Your presence and Your working, willing hands and feet to follow You, and enough music to sing and floors to dance on so that we celebrate the Kingdom just where we are.

May we be courageous and kind, bold and brave, and radical and inclusive;

give us a beating heart and soft enough edges so that all can be healed and thrive by belonging.

Amen.

Circuit Vision Prayer remains:

Help us Lord

to see what you see,

when you look at our Circuit:

imprint this vision deep within us,

where it can take root, grow and deepen,

and inspire all we do and how we do it;

In your name, Amen.

DAY 10

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

EDI Officer: Revd Julie Hassall

Over the past few months our rich and reflective District has been joined by some inspirational folk, guiding our thinking as in our study group we have begun to grapple with issues of equality, diversity and inclusion. During Advent, in the light of the Black Lives Matter movement, we were delighted to have Revd Dr Jill Marsh join us to look at 'White Privilege', Revd Dr Inderjit Bhogal led us in thinking about 'Black and White in Scripture'. We were thankful that because of technology these invitations were possible. Lent 2021 led us to looking at different aspects of the EDI Toolkit and again we were joined by those who encouraged us to reflect on what a Methodist Church might look like which truly embodies a commitment to 'A Place for All'. EDI matters – in every local chapel, every District, every heart. It matters not just because discrimination of every kind must be eradicated within the Methodist family (which it must), but because our understanding of God's heart is inextricably linked with our love for all people. During the next year we will once again be organising study groups for particular times in the church calendar which will give opportunity for theological reflection with practical response in Circuits and churches. Watch out for events planned on the District website. I want to encourage anyone who might feel called to be part of a District EDI team to come forward – please contact me and together we can raise the profile of equality, diversity and inclusion such that our church council agendas, District meetings, and fellowship groups have at their heart a God-centred awareness of the stories and lives of those around us. And more than that, we respond in love and a commitment to justice for ALL. We await the outcome of the Methodist Conference debate on the 'Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity' and will share more of that in due course through District channels. In the meantime, please do get in touch. We commit ourselves to living open-handed, lives which reflect the love we have inherited and seek to celebrate the diversity of humankind within the Methodist Church and far beyond.

God of love, we give thanks for:

- the opportunity to thrive, to be nurtured and to grow in wisdom, to mature in faith as we seek to live Kingdom lives;
- those who challenge our assumptions;
- all who have made us feel welcome and included;
- those who lead the way in striving for equality, inclusion and the celebration of diversity within the Methodist Church.

We pray for:

- local churches and Circuits dealing with injustice and discrimination;
- District EDI officers in their praying and conferring;
- All who sense the moving of the Holy Spirit in calling us to a renewed commitment to be a 'Place for All'!

Gracious and compassionate God, forgive us when we fail to lift our eyes to see the injustice and suffering around us – challenge us to love and an inclusivity which is real and life-changing. For the sake of human flourishing in the Kingdom of grace, mercy and love. Amen.

Revd Julie Hassall – julie.hassall@methodist.org.uk – 01538 751907

DAY 11 Englesea Brook Chapel and Museum of Primitive Methodism – “Transformed lives, transforming lives”

Project Director: Mrs Ruth Hilton
Heritage Officer: Amy Wilkinson
Learning Officer: Elizabeth Morris
Research Officer: Revd Dr Tim Macquiban
Administrator: Stephen Brown



Museums and Heritage Centres are woven into the fabric of our society, loved and trusted by the public, to ensure that we don't lose the tangible links to our past, to interpret and tell the stories that shape us. At Englesea Brook, as one of the four prime sites of Methodist Heritage, we are custodians of the Primitive Methodist part of the story, unearthing and retelling stories of lives transformed by the work of the Primitive Methodist Church.

William Clowes, was one of the founders of PM whose life story is of one transformed from his somewhat dissolute life by the love of God and whose preaching and style of evangelism drew many to faith in God. Other stories of women and men reflect the passion of Primitive Methodists to improve the lives of the poor and marginalised.

This year we commemorate the birth of the other co-founder of Primitive Methodism, **Hugh Bourne**, in 1772. As we prepare for this special 250th anniversary year starting on 3 April 2022, we want to use his passion for education and learning (especially science) for all and his faithfulness in preaching the gospel to demonstrate the connection between our Methodist heritage and contemporary mission. This fits the focus of our work, **‘Transformed lives; Transforming lives’** which continues to inspire us to engage with our community in new ways, especially through digital technology through open learning and inclusive actions. We invite you to come and visit, or connect with us through the social media, to hear the stories, see the range of artefacts and be reinvigorated and transformed in your Christian journey.

We give thanks for:

- God's blessings on the work at our museum continued online throughout the pandemic, reaching out to the needs of our dispersed community in isolation;
- the continued success of the work of the Alsager Book Emporium at Hassall Road Chapel as it builds up its clientele after lockdown;
- our past Youth President, Phoebe Parkin, and all those young people having the courage to challenge our misuse of God's planet, creation, and resources.

Continued...

Please pray for:

- returning visitors to Englesea Brook and the Book Emporium that all who are drawn to us find a place of refuge love, support and welcome. We pray especially for those, who come not knowing why and then engage with life changing stories which encourage them in their own journeys of discovery;
- local farmers today in the post-Brexit world of uncertainty and climate emergency; as they face challenges of changing weather patterns, milk prices, the uncertainty of trading arrangements and the right use of chemicals on their land;
- issues of justice and peace, and for villages, towns and cities of Sanctuary offering hospitality to those seeking refuge and safety in our society.

Methodist Heritage Prayer:

God of the past, the present and the future, we thank You for the way Your goodness and beauty, love and mercy, have been declared through the story of Your people, called in every generation out of slavery into freedom, called to follow Your Son Jesus Christ, called to be witnesses to the ends of the earth in the power of Your Spirit.

We thank You that in the re-telling of the history of the church, and in the re-discovery of Your presence in places of encounter such as Englesea Brook, we can engage in bringing buildings and stories to life today as tools for evangelism.

We pray for those who care for these special chapels and churches which seek to be open to visitors, tourists and pilgrims, who come to learn about the history of the people called Methodists; for curators and teachers, volunteer guides and helpers and trustees of historic chapels.

*We pray for all churches seeking to make sense of the past especially for Englesea Brook as it seeks through its **Bourne 250 Year** to connect to many people visiting the museum with the story of Your abiding love for us in every generation, that we might be alive to the challenge of God's mission today and the work we must do for the future.*

*We ask these things through the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour,
Amen*

(Tim Macquiban)

DAY 12

Local Preachers and Leaders of Worship

Local Preachers 'Secretary and Tutors 'Coordinator: (vacancy)

Leaders of Worship and Preachers 'Trust Convenor: Mr Stanley Clowes

(page prepared by Dr Geoff Dickinson)

Local Preachers and Worship Leaders serve the Methodist Church and are an intrinsic part of the life and witness of the Church. They are responsible for the leading of services in most of the District's churches each Sunday, willingly responding to the message inspired by God. "Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction." 2 Timothy 4:2 (NIV)

As we respond to change in society and our church-life following the pandemic let us be open to new expressions of worship to meet the needs of all the Church family wherever they may be.

Give thanks for:

- the people who are responding to God's call to share the Gospel within the challenges of different styles of worship;
- the people who assist with the training and development of Local Preachers and Worship Leaders as tutors and mentors;
- those who have completed their training and are now stepping out in their calling;
- those who have been leading worship for many years, for their commitment and dedication;
- the Christian witness both within our churches and within our communities by preachers and worship leaders.

Please pray for:

- all Local Preachers, for their commitment, lives and ministry;
- those who actively and faithfully lead worship on a regular basis in their Churches and Circuits;
- for those who are now retired, that they may encourage those who follow;
- wisdom and discernment in the preparation and delivery of the Gospel message by all preachers responding to the promptings of God's Spirit;
- the people of God and for the churches, that they may be built up in love, service and mission;
- those who are exploring a vocation to lead worship and to preach. Guided by the Spirit, may they respond with confidence and faith.

Now, as ever, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field." [Matthew 9: 37 – 38] We pray, Lord, that You will open the hearts of women and men to hear Your call, and by the power of Your Holy Spirit set them ablaze to respond, and take the Good News of Your Kingdom to all who need to hear it, and be drawn into Your loving family. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

DAY 13 Saltbox



Chief Executive: Lloyd Cooke

A charity with Christian values supporting faith groups, older people, those at risk of homelessness and those in debt.

Company registered in England and Wales 6427360 Registered Charity 1121832

Saltbox is synonymous across Stoke-on-Trent and beyond for promoting united Christian mission and also providing community-based services for vulnerable and marginalised members of society. As we reach out to those in need our heart to help to give practical help and support recognising that God wants to bless all people. Our three caring services are:

- CareLink – helps lonely and isolated older people to socialise and maintain healthy independence in their own homes;
- Restart – offers support, housing and spiritual development to ex-offenders;
- Money Matters – helps Foodbank clients on low incomes with advice and debt management.

We work hard to nurture potential partnership opportunities with statutory, voluntary and community organisations to help bring about community cohesion and transformation. Our Christian faith is paramount in everything we do and is the foundation that Saltbox is built on. On a continued basis, we work with churches and faith groups to promote UNITY, PRAYER and MISSION across the region.

Please pray for:

- God's blessing on the work of Saltbox, and specifically for:
- its advice and support of churches and Christian ministries;
- its role as a bridge with various local secular agencies, media outlets and the wider voluntary sector;
- various caring services including Restart (housing and supporting ex-offenders), CareLink (telephone befriending for lonely, older people), Money Matters (debt advice alongside Stoke Foodbank);
- its Chief Executive, Lloyd Cooke, the Senior Management Team and Trustee Board as they all seek to grow the Saltbox vision;
- increased favour on its partnership working and increased funding as the work grows;
- the plans to refurbish Saltbox's headquarter building in Bemersley House, Hanley (also home to the Methodist Book Centre).

Lord of all, we thank You that You empower us to care for all people and especially those facing many and varied needs. Bless us to work in unity with brothers and sisters in other denominations. Bless all that we do in Your name, and bring to us those who need to find us, and also those who have a heart for reaching out with us and extending our vision. Amen.

01782 207200 www.saltbox.org.uk FB: @SaltboxCentre Twitter: @SaltboxCentre

DAY 14

Superintendent

Revd Mark Lawrence

Supernumeraries

Revd Paul Clapham

Revd Edna Perry

Youth Worker

Kevin Lee

Market Drayton (11/14)

Whilst our Circuit is small, our ambitions for God's kingdom are not.

Our smallest fellowship based in **Hinstock** village, now a class of Market Drayton church, is a small, faithful group of mainly elderly people. The village however continues to grow. **Market Drayton** fellowship is the largest of the three and enjoys rich corporate worship and an active focus on youth work. The fellowship continues to ask God to equip His people through the gifting and guidance of His Holy Spirit for mission, in particular through a number of small 'life' groups. It has two vehicles, a minibus and a converted double decker to aid mission and community service. Market Drayton has a strong and beneficial relationship with the schools of the town and youth work includes outreach clubs and in-school youth work, in addition to the junior church classes and junior and youth fellowships.

The church at Ashley continues to work in ecumenical partnership with the churches of **Ashley, Loggerheads and Mucklestone**, especially through Lent and Easter Services and Harvest celebrations.

The Circuit looks to engage with our local communities in the most appropriate and accessible ways.

Give thanks for:

- the challenges provided by the pandemic and the opportunity to re-consider how we do church;
- our young people and the work that the Holy Spirit is doing among and through them;
- the acceptance and trust we experience from our communities and the opportunities this provides to demonstrate God's love;
- the musical and technological gifts that continue to enable and enhance worship;
- the gift of a new superintendent minister to work with the circuit as we explore next steps.

Continued...

Please pray:

- that the Holy Spirit would help us to learn from the lessons of the recent pandemic and increase our desire to help, support and love those in need;
- that our congregations would learn to identify their God-given gifts both in themselves and in each other and seek opportunities to use them for His glory;
- for the establishment of new and accessible ways of being church in Hinstock;
- for continued success in our youth work as we adapt to the changing face of youth culture;
- for the development of life groups into mission hubs where members care for one another and for the neighbourhoods in which they meet;
- for Market Drayton '*Churches Together*' as we seek to serve God in the community through Foodbank, CAP, support in giving up addictions and job club services;
- that we all might use the resources available to us effectively, to serve others and proclaim the Kingdom;
- for members to step up to give freely of their time and talents to enable growth and development.

Lord, we give thanks for Your faithful presence and gentle encouragement. Help us to move forward remembering Your love and care throughout the pandemic and seeking Your will in the days ahead. Give us ears to hear You, hearts to love You and others, minds to know Your will and courage to follow Your leading.

Fill us with your passion to bring the good news to others and equip us to serve our fellow women and men and care for Your world.

Never let us forget that we are Your representatives, and ambassadors of Your kingdom; forgive our failings and our doubts and give us confidence through Your Holy Spirit in the one in whose name we go, our Lord Jesus.

Amen.

DAY 15

Superintendent

Revd Jenny Dyer

Ministers

Revd Kim Kerchal

Revd Joyce Smith

Lay Workers

Lay Pastor:

Paul Owen

Administrator:

Francesca Gravano

Stoke-on-Trent North (11/15)

We have now nine churches, two having closed during (though not because of) lockdown.

Two of our churches host significant community centres in partnership with other organisations. Our Night Shelter, based in premises owned by the Stoke-on-Trent Mission Circuit, has continued to do a great deal of good work, supplying meals to those sleeping rough and in hotel accommodation, but has during lockdown been unable to provide sleeping accommodation.

Give thanks for:

- the work of the Night Shelter, standing alongside the most vulnerable in society;
- the work of the Hub@ST6 community centre and the Sandy Lane Centre in Brown Edge;
- MHA Communities lunch clubs reopening in our premises;
- church activities restarting after lockdown with renewed vigour.

Please pray for:

- our conversations with Stoke-on-Trent South Circuit regarding merger;
- those in training as Worship Leaders and Preachers in both North and South Circuits;
- imagination and discernment in using our buildings in partnership arrangements;
- the progress of our proposal to employ a Children and Families Worker.

Lord Jesus, who came to preach good news to the poor, prosper the work of Christian Aid, All We Can, and all who work for the relief of the world's poor. Jesus, who came to proclaim freedom for prisoners, guide the work of prison chaplains, the Prison Fellowship, and those who campaign for prisoners of conscience.

Jesus, who came to bring recovery of sight for the blind, bless the work of eye surgeons, Sightsavers, and those who support the visually impaired, that your word may be fulfilled. Amen.

DAY 16

Keele University & Chaplaincy

Chaplaincy Team at Keele: *Free Church & Coordinating Chaplain:* Revd James Pritchard, *Anglican Chaplain:* Revd Stephanie Couvela, *Lay Catholic Chaplain:* Mr Niall Hammond, *Administrative Assistant:* Ms Anna Mountford, *Muslim Chaplain:* Mrs Rukia Bi

Give thanks for:

- the life and work of Keele University; its focus on education and research equipping individuals and society for future challenges;
- ecumenical and inter-faith work at Keele, particularly for the community of Keele Chapel seeking to be a diverse and inclusive community bearing faithful witness to Christ in worship and service;
- the support and commitment of the university towards chaplaincy and the openness for the chaplaincy team to share in mission and ministry in a secular environment.

Please pray for:

- students returning or starting university following the challenges of pandemic;
- the University facing challenges and changes following Covid-19 especially financial uncertainty;
- 'Haven' a small group facilitated by the chaplaincy to support LGBT+ people of faith;
- staff and student faith groups seeking to nurture their discipleship and bear witness in their studies and work;
- key areas of research seeking to make the world a better place: Sustainability, Global Health and Social Inclusion;
- the Free Church Resource Group overseeing the chaplaincy provided by James, and for the ongoing support of the sponsoring denominations. (Methodist, Baptist and URC);
- all places of further and higher education in our district where lives are being shaped and equipped.

'...live up to the life to which God called you. ² Always be humble, gentle, and patient, accepting each other in love. ³ You are joined together with peace through the Spirit, so make every effort to continue together in this way. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, and God called you to have one hope.'
Ephesians 4 1b-4 CEV.

God of boundless Grace, help us to know of your inclusive love, to share it in who we are, what we say and in what we do. Enable and equip us to bear witness to Christ's love in our unity and to celebrate our difference and diversity. Open wide our eyes to see You in others, especially those who think, act or believe differently than ourselves. By Your dynamic Spirit embolden our faith and our hope in you and equip us to share it with others. Amen.

DAY 17

Methodist Women in Britain (MWiB)

District Executive Committee:

Sylvia Harrison (President), Kath Roberts (Vice-President), Margaret Lindley (Forum Representative), Mavis Bailey (Secretary), Margaret Lindley (Treasurer), Chris Thompson (Communications).

Methodist women have always supported each other, sharing faith in laughter, tears and friendship. All women are welcomed into the fellowship of Methodist Women in Britain. MWiB aims to connect women who have an interest in creative spirituality and a passion for global justice.

We have a love for the World Methodist Church; the Easter Offering both raises money for the Fund for World Mission and provides an opportunity for Circuits to celebrate the World Church. Our passion for global justice leads us to focus on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to campaign on social issues in this country. Our District will be spotlighting 'Invisible Women', shining a light on issues that make women invisible within communities and institutions. As part of this, we are raising money for maternity services in Ethiopia, including fistula treatment.

Give thanks for:

- carers who have taken on many additional and sometimes exhausting responsibilities during the pandemic;
- women, around the world, who are taking an active role of leadership on climate change so that they are having a transformative effect in their countries and communities.

Please pray for:

- a resolve in government to tackle gender inequality, which still exists in the UK and has been exacerbated by the pandemic;
- suitable employment for women who have been disproportionately affected by job losses and the economic slump;
- UN Sustainable Development Goal 13 which seeks to encourage international cooperation to take action to combat climate change and its impacts;
- our district MWiB committee seeking new ways to express our ideals: for women, for justice, for Christ;
- Ruth Parrott who became the Connexional President of MWiB in June 2021.

Transforming God, We pray for all who are teaching children about healthy relationships and shaping their beliefs about the worth of women and girls. We particularly pray for agencies, including All We Can, who are promoting the education of girls in countries where there is not equality in access to education. We pray for the victims of gender-based violence which has increased during the Covid pandemic. May we join in Your transforming work in our world so that people may learn to live and work together with dignity and respect. In Jesus' name, Amen.

DAY 18

Superintendent

Revd Kathryn Stephens

Ministry

The Village Church:

Revd Ruth Jeffries

Swan Bank Associate

Pastor:

Sam Taylor

Potters Church Pastor:

Alison Price

Oasis Church Pastor:

Amy Wyatt

Whitehill Church Pastor:

Glynis Cooper

New Chapel, Packmoor &

Mount Pleasant Pastor:

Lynn Tindale

Wesley Hall & The Gateway

Pastor:

Brian Tattersall

Supernumeraries

Revd Peter Hancock

Revd Stephen Hatcher

Revd John Hibberts

Revd John Keeling

Revd Arthur Wakelin

Minister in other

appointment:

Revd Derek Balsdon

Lay Staff

Stephanie Aspinall

Georgina Boden

Rachel Cooper

April Fone

Alice Hall

Amelia Knapper

Alison Lynley

Alice Mashanga

Jessica Sims

Sandy Wagg

Stoke-on-Trent Mission (11/18)

Give thanks for:

- God's faithfulness as He has supported us through the past year and for those through Him who have come to faith recently;
- the faithful service of church members who with a pastoral heart have cared for each other, their families and neighbours and reached out to the local community in many different ways;
- the gifts of different members of our circuit who have worked together in producing a variety of online resources and the opportunity to reach into the lives of many across the UK and abroad through online media;
- the teamwork which has emerged in the circuit in a variety of ways of working together for the church and the community.

Please pray:

- that we will be able to listen to God's voice and journey with Him as we seek to discern which activities to lay down and which to renew as we emerge from lockdown and to discover new ways of 'doing' Church and reaching others in the community with the truth of the Good News of Jesus;
- for the churches' community partnerships as we seek to take church into the community, rather than inviting the community to church;
- for the emerging forms of teamwork to develop and grow in order to resource the churches across the circuit.

Gracious God, we would ask for Your protection and guidance for our Superintendent Minister and over the ten churches in our Circuit, from the smallest to the largest, that we may all contribute to the work of the Kingdom in the best way possible according to our means. Show us where You would want us to be in the unfolding months and provide the means to help us achieve Your will where we are lacking. Remind us of Your promises which never fail and Your lasting word over all our lives. Grant that we might put all our effort into proclaiming the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour in each of our communities and give us the strength, will and wisdom to walk the path You have chosen for each of us. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

DAY 19

Immerse

Ministry:

Pioneer Mission Leaders: David Oxford and Simon Sutcliffe

This has been a tough 18 months or so for Immerse who have had to manage many changes. Since leaving the centre last year and Covid taking root in all our daily lives Immerse has been on a completely new journey. We have always felt we are a nomadic people but this last year has put that to the test. As we start to come out of lockdown we begin to look for the footprints of God around us to see where we can help bring light to this world.

Give thanks for:

- the creativity and energy of the folk of Immerse who are looking forward to a new project and long for a world transformed;
- all the people directly and indirectly involved with Immerse;
- what God already has in store for us.

Please pray for:

- the people of immerse and how we can continue to support each other especially as we start to come back together;
- Immerse as they look to new projects;
- the Methodist Pioneering Pathways, as Immerse supports others who are looking to pioneer new forms of ministry and community;
- strength and wisdom for members of Immerse as they look to future projects and challenges;
- people who we do not yet know, but with whom God is already at work, to come across our path;
- Creation itself and all those working to sustain it;
- the wider Methodist Church to recognise the potential in the pioneering movement.

A prayer of commitment (from the Immerse prayer app):

*Heavenly One,
You are beyond all knowledge and yet fully known to us.
You are outside of our experience and yet deep within us.
We commit ourselves anew to follow Your will and to work towards Your purposes that all the world might be transformed for the benefit of all creation.
Fill us with hope, we pray, in Jesus name. Amen.*

DAY 20

Superintendent

Rev'd Linda Catlow

Ministers

Rev'd Pam Roberts

Rev'd Jeff Short

Supernumeraries

Rev'd Stuart Hickerman

Rev'd Alexander Brown

Stoke-on-Trent South (11/20)

The Stoke-on-Trent South Circuit takes in three towns of the Potteries: Stoke, Fenton and Longton. It also incorporates the rural community of Forsbrook, the housing estates of Meir, Lightwood, Sandford Hill, Fenton Park and the suburban areas of Trentham and Blythe Bridge. The Circuit is made up of nine churches: Broadway, Fenton Park, Lightwood, Longton Central Hall, Sandford Hill, Temple Street, Trentham, West End, and one church operating on two sites at Forsbrook and Blythe Bridge.

Give thanks for:

- the Circuit Services and Bible Studies which have taken place on Zoom and WhyPay during this pandemic. They have brought us closer together as a Circuit and been a valued and enriching time of worship;
- the Church and Circuit Stewards who have made the safety of their church family paramount by ensuring that Risk Assessments are in place and operating, as church doors have reopened;
- the numerous volunteers and Lay Workers who have ensured that Food Banks remained open, meals were taken to those who shielded, shopping was dropped off, 'Thinking of you' cards and letters were delivered, telephone calls made;
- the Ministers who have continued to ensure the church and community are spiritually fed and held together in love and prayer.

Continued...

Please pray for:

- the actioning of our Top Ten Priorities that came from the Circuit Review;
- those churches struggling financially as we move out of the pandemic;
- more awareness and action towards EDI (Equality, Diversity & Inclusion);
- more awareness and action towards being Eco Churches;
- our work with children and young people;
- the ongoing conversation between Stoke North and Stoke South Circuits.

*God of the still small voice
May Your calming voice be heard
By the opposed and the oppose
Through the corridors of power
and in words on social media*

*May Your challenging voice be heard
By homemakers and policy shakers
Through closed doors
and in gathering spaces*

*May Your loving voice be heard
By those with much and those with little
Through affluent streets
and poverty stricken places*

*May Your voice
of justice, peace and love be heard
By us, by them, by all
Bringing calm, bringing challenge, bringing love.*

*God of the still small voice
shown to us in the calming, challenging and
loving voice of Jesus Christ.
Thanks be to You.
Amen.*

(Linda Catlow)

DAY 21

Cheshire Agricultural Chaplaincy

Cheshire Agricultural Chaplain: Sharon Mayer

As for so many, the Covid pandemic has brought unforeseen challenges to our ways of working, but also new opportunities and silver linings.

God has been faithful to us throughout, both as a team and also in our engagement with the Cheshire farming community.

We were able to maintain our popular lunch groups but in different form, taking out lunches to individual farmers leading to valuable one-to-one doorstep chats which were never possible in the larger group situations. Deeper relationships were forged with very lonely people.

We used farm caterers to source our meals, hopefully providing a little much needed custom.

We hand-delivered over 70 Christmas boxes and Easter bags filled with seasonal treats, where possible using local farming-sourced produce.

Serious one-to-one support has never stopped for those needing it, again socially distanced.

We are thankful for grants that have helped us fund food packages and visits to the vulnerable.

We are now beginning to visit more freely and resume social events once more.

Please pray for:

- our team who have their own issues of health, farm worries and anxieties over Covid. Much has fallen on a few, who are very weary;
- new members who need to find their role on the farm;
- our farmers. Some are facing seriously high levels of poor mental health for many different reasons;
- wisdom in how we navigate the next few months in our social activities;
- opportunities to share in church services and fellowship meetings once more. We have missed that!

Thank you so much for your prayers and support.

DAY 22

Superintendent

Revd Liz Singleton

Ministers

Revd Christine Legge

Revd Joy Ventom

*Keele University Free
Church Chaplain:*

Revd James Pritchard

Supernumeraries

Revd Peter Bayley

Revd Cecil Mann

Revd John Taylor

Support Staff

Circuit Administrator:

Michelle Bradbury

Circuit Finance Book

Keeper:

Kaye Chadwick

North Staffordshire (11/22)

Our Circuit is built up of ten churches, including town centre, urban, suburban, and rural areas. Whilst there is some really good work happening around the Circuit, in reality there are parts of the circuit where mission and outreach are more challenging.

This has been heightened by the recent pandemic, two church buildings have closed in the period too. Most churches have re-opened for worship on a regular basis; people have genuinely missed each other.

Give thanks for:

- positive signs of churches and people wanting to reconnect with members across the Circuit;
- new initiatives that are being explored around the Circuit;
- the discovery of new or unused gifts that people have.

Please pray for:

- the Circuit Leadership Team as they try work through the effects of the pandemic;
- concerns over what the emerging church will look like after the pandemic;
- us that we will continue to find new ways of being Circuit and Church;
- a renewed enthusiasm for all churches to engage in real mission.

Loving Lord,

In times of uncertainty, worry and anxiety help us to continue to put our trust in You.

We give thanks for the ability to dream dreams and to help bring about a refreshed desire to be the Church You want us to be.

May we always look to You our rock and our foundation.

Amen.

Manager: Ian White

The 'District Team' is a well-established part of our District and since 2012 has worked with a large number of Circuits to support mission and ministry. We work collaboratively and we seek to challenge too. We work with Circuits to find ways of sharing the gospel and supporting local ministry in these challenging times. In a wide range of contexts we seek meaningful ways of sharing good news through the local church and Circuit.

The support we have offered in five Circuits to date, with work continuing in three Circuits, has been very positively received. We are keen to discuss with Circuits how ministry can be supported and to liaise over specific needs.

Members of the District Team are recruited to meet specific and identified local needs.

Give thanks for:

- continuing positive responses to the involvement of the Team in Circuits and local churches;
- openness across the District to engaging with the Team in a variety of situations and for a variety of reasons;
- each member of the District Team who brings their own unique gifts and graces to work across the District;
- the coordination of the Team and the discernment of new opportunities for mission and ministries;
- the continuing ability to work with other Districts who have embraced the concept of the Team and who have now made appointments to develop the Church's calling in this way;
- clear evidence of the sustainability of work to ensure that when the presence of the Team comes to a conclusion, fruitful activity is maintained in the local context.

Please pray for:

- the ongoing work in the Staffordshire Moorlands and Cheshire South and North Cheshire Circuits;
- other Circuits and churches as they discern paths of Ministry;
- ongoing strong mutual support amongst the members of the Team as we share and develop our experiences and seek further new ways of working together and a continued recognition of the value of all in mission and mission.

Lord, by Your grace continue to pour out Your Holy Spirit on all who seek to do Your will today and every day. Empower, encourage, strengthen and support the new beginnings, and the fellowships that are seeking to travel in new directions of ministry, mission and evangelism. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

DAY 24

Superintendent

Revd Julie Hassall

Ministers

Revd Richard Pope (AP)

Revd Eleanor Smith

Cliff College Principal:

Revd Ashley Cooper

Supernumeraries

Revd John Bates

Revd Colin Cooper

Revd John Edwards

Revd Anthony Tagg

Revd David Watson

Revd E. Wollaston (URC)

Lay Staff Team

Mark Hatcher

Jonathan Newbould

Margaret Parkinson

Abigail Ratcliffe

Staffordshire Moorlands (11/24)

The Staffordshire Moorlands Circuit is a richly diverse community – outstanding countryside, market towns, farming communities and villages which share both the joy of rural life together and the challenges of vulnerability and isolation.

We enjoy many fruitful ecumenical partnerships as the church seeks to be actively engaged in servant ministry, and we remain especially committed to the sharing of the Gospel within community, outside the walls of the gathered churches, through the ministry of lay and ordained in partnership together.

Give thanks for:

- the witness of Children and Families workers, creative ways of reaching out in schools and a renewed sense of team working;
- those who have responded to the need for a more formal system of pastoral care, and for Margaret Parkinson whose gifts are a blessing to this circuit;
- all who have embraced new ways of worshipping and gathering for fellowship – for patience, humour and perseverance;
- our Circuit Leadership Team which has led the Circuit with determination and compassion.

Please pray for:

- those who work to raise within Circuit matters of equality, diversity and inclusion within local churches
- staff team, trying to find our way in the 'new normal' ways of being church together
- all in our communities who are struggling with isolation or poverty, loneliness and separation

Continued...

God of all grace, make us alert to Your presence, wise and courageous to step out in faith, to pitch our tents in new places.

Help us, we pray to be mindful of the needs and concerns of communities – to work for the preservation of wildlife areas and the celebration of all people as equal and precious in your sight.

Gift us with the insight and imagination to notice the things which happen around us, to watch over our neighbours in love, and to live in peace.

In Jesus' name.

Amen.

Ministry: Revd William R. Porter



The Beacon house of Prayer started as a Methodist fresh expression in 2007 and is now a non-denominational charity, creating a dedicated place for prayer for individuals and Christian group. After a year of lockdown, with virtual prayer rhythms and events, and only sporadic and partial opening of the building, we are pleased to be more fully open to both our community and the public for prayer.

The Beacon house of prayer offers:

- *a prayerful space:* we try to create a prayerful space where people can come and find a place to pray and encounter the love of God. We have multiple prayer rooms available for personal or group use.
- *a prayerful rhythm:* we have a central prayer room, where a team lead a daily rhythm of worship and prayer weekday mornings and some evenings. This is our engine room where we gather to seek the Lord and pray 'your kingdom come over local, national and global issues.
- *a prayerful community:* The Beacon is facilitated by a wonderful team of volunteers, both praying and helping with all areas of ministry, and by our wider community who follow our rhythm of life and support the Beacon vision.
- *a prayerful service:* we host conferences and teaching events; we offer opportunities for prayer for healing and also prayer ministry; we provide ways of exploring creative prayer and worship.

Give thanks for:

- a new emerging vision for prayer and for this ministry amongst the core and the leadership of the Beacon;
- the expanded connections and stronger networking with other prayer groups around the country in this last year;
- the greater understanding of our togetherness, friendships and common bonds as human beings in our nation through the shaking of the pandemic.

Please pray for:

- the healing and spiritual renewal necessary for our core community as we re-gather and move forward in this ministry;
- more opportunities to serve both the local churches in our region as a resource for prayer, and also the local communities in practical ways of blessing and social action;
- the churches across our country to be the expression of Jesus, in our gospel welcome of all whatever the stage of their life journey, and in bringing his restorative justice into realms of society.

Continued...

A prayer:

Move by Your Spirit in our lives and in our nation, dear Lord. Shine your healing light on the hurting and broken places in our lives and communities. Take us deeper, God, in Your work of transforming grace, to clear the clutter and hindrances to our walk of faith, to uncover our true dependency on You and to recover a renewed joy in our faith and in Your coming kingdom. We pray this in the name of Jesus, Amen.

For more information on the activities and ongoing ministry of the Beacon house of prayer see:

Website: www.beaconhop.org

Email: thebeaconhop@gmail.com

Telephone 01782 8272398

You would be very welcome to visit us from your church; please get in touch.

God bless, Revd Dr William & Mrs Karen Porter

DAY 26

Safeguarding

District Safeguarding Officer: Chris Lewis

We cannot help but be aware that our world has some very dark places in it, and that they are all around us. People made in God's image, of all ages, sizes, shapes and colours, are at risk of abuse, trafficking, neglect, hunger, and the other evils that can be found in our societies.

God's Son, the Light of the World, called us to be lights with Him, and to shine our light into the dark places, so that they can be cleansed and healed.

It is not an easy task, but Jesus tells those that have faith and believe in Him will have His Holy Spirit to help them in whatever they do, and wherever they go.

Lord of light, we remember that You came into the world to banish the darkness.

We hold before You those people whose lives have been overshadowed by abuse.

Lord, open our ears to hear the truth, open our eyes to truly see what is happening in front of us, open our minds that we may acknowledge and understand the damage abuse, in all its forms, can do.

Open our hearts to find ways to make safe space for all people.

Amen.

DAY 27

The Methodist Book Centre

Manager: Julie Ann Ellis

Christian Resources for Life and the Methodist Book Centre are part of the District's mission outreach. The Centre recognises that its calling is to:

- support the Christian Community in mission and ministry through resource and education
- encourage growth and depth in commitment to Christ
- focus on customer needs and to exceed expectations

Each member of the team at the Methodist Book Centre is committed to enabling others to know the joy of the gospel of Jesus Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit. We seek to do this through the provision of a variety of resources for use by individuals, small groups and churches. We are ecumenical in outlook and in our understanding of the Christian Church. Directly supported by the experience and vision of the Methodist District of Chester & Stoke-on Trent we have a wide experience in the needs of individuals as they seek to know more about the Christian faith and those who wish to deepen their own spirituality. We have practical knowledge of the sort of resources that are more suitable and successful in differing situations and seek to provide help and direction to groups and churches as they seek to proclaim the Christian message.

Our Centre is located in Gitana Street which is almost in the centre of Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent where we have been providing books and other resources to churches and Sunday schools for nearly 70 years. (Phone 01782 212146 and web: www.crfl.co.uk) However, we are more than a bookshop and have been described as an oasis in the middle of a busy retail and commercial environment. Our Centre Manager has many years of experience in the retail trade and the selecting and provision of Christian books and other resources. Julie Ann is ably supported by her team at the Centre and behind the scenes. You are most welcome to drop in for a chat and a browse anytime we are open – which is Monday to Saturday 10:00am to 4:00pm.

Give thanks for:

- the staff who have kept the Centre alive and well through phone and internet contact during this time of pandemic;
- the authors, illustrators and all those who create resources, for their insights and observations contained within the thousands of items available.

Please pray for:

- the Centre as it reopens to the public following its closure during the Covid epidemic;
- the authors of the many books on so many different aspects of the Christian faith;
- the mission and outreach of the Book Centre and Christian Resources for Life and for those individuals who deepen their faith in Christ through the resources available.

Lord God, we pray that the awareness of individuals and churches in the Methodist Book Centre and Christian Life may grow in their fellowship with Christ and pass on to others the joy of the Christian gospel. Amen.

DAY 28 Learning Network – North West & Mann Region

The Learning Network is part of the Connexional Team but we are a dispersed staff working in our region (North West and Mann) which includes the Chester and Stoke-on-Trent District. It is great to know that you pray for us as we partner with you in the purposes of the Methodist Church.

Our team consists of Alison Ball, Melody Clarke, Revd Dr Jasmine Devadason, Alison Hulse, Dr Kristie Legg, Dr Edel McClean, Brec Seaton, Revd Simon Sutcliffe,

Our role is enabling Circuits to be places of learning. For learning, read discipleship in its widest sense – whether that is about your focus and mission, how you resource yourselves, prayer, worship, evangelism and service, learning together and caring for each other. We draw on the wisdom and experience amongst the whole church and beyond as well as offering what we bring in our own areas of skill, knowledge and experience.

We have journeyed with you during the pandemic that has affected our world and we have adapted and learnt alongside you. We continue to plan our work for the coming year in a place of uncertainty as to what life in the District will be like as restrictions lift. Nonetheless, we have changed and will continue to offer blended learning opportunities, cross-boundary events online that take away the element of travel and allow more to fit such events into their busy lives. We look forward to picking up on relationship building in face-to-face contexts as risks reduce. You can invite us to work alongside your Circuit, your office holders, your volunteers to explore what the ‘new normal’ might be that better enables us to fulfil ‘Our Calling’. To keep up-to-date with the work we are doing on your behalf, please sign up to our newsletter at discipleshaped.org.

As I write this for you, we know that one of the Coordinators, Alison Ransome has been seconded out of the LN team for this Connexional year. We are awaiting decisions as to the provision for this role. Until now, Alison Ball has been sharing the coordination role with Alison Ransome and has also been the District Aligned officer for Chester and Stoke-on-Trent District so will be a good first contact for any Learning Network enquiries pending any announcement on the future Coordination role.

Give thanks for:

- the welcome return of Melody Clarke from maternity leave;
- all we have learnt about engaging people with learning and development in new ways.

Please pray for:

- each team member and safety as they serve the region;
- wisdom in prioritising our resources to develop learning Circuits enabled to fulfil ‘Our Calling’;

Continued...

- appreciation of God's creation and consideration of our impact on it, particularly as our work has involved a great deal of travel across the region in the past;
- imagination to overcome challenges of communication, distance and relationship to enable learning and development;
- sensitivity to the emerging needs of Circuits and churches who have experienced pain and loss
- a heart for the gospel of Jesus Christ in all we do.

Our team prayer is:

Jesus, we entrust ourselves, our team and our work to you today. Amen.

DAY 29

Ecology and the Environment

Lead Officer: Siân Davidson

As Eco Officer my role involves looking at environmental issues such as climate change, plastic pollution and how individuals and churches can work to make a positive difference to the environment. Early this year we held an event on zoom called 'A Green Conversation' which looked at hearing and sharing views on contemporary Christian issues on the event. We were joined by Professor David Clough and Martha Rand who both gave talks and the event was attended by many from around the District. Over the next year I will be working to set up a District steering group on the environment looking at issues to address around the District on climate change, the environment, and plastic pollution, and looking to work towards A Rocha UK eco awards.

Give thanks for:

- Forest Church in the North Cheshire Circuit;
- Wesley Church Chester on being awarded the Bronze Eco Church award.

We pray for:

- the Eco steering group that will be established and those who feel called to be a part of it;
- Churches around the District who look at how they can address the issues impacting the environment and ways to become more environmentally friendly;
- Churches as they and the District look at working towards A Rocha UK Eco awards;
- Forest Church led by Revd Jo Brown in the North Cheshire Circuit.

Dear Lord, we pray for the world around us.

For birds singing in the trees, the harvest and farmers, for rivers, streams and the flow of water on a cool breeze. For parks, countryside and all that is in between.

Lord, You have called us to be stewards of the earth, help us to look after the world around us so that all who call it home can enjoy the wonders of Your creation.

Amen.

DAY 30

Chester & Stoke-on-Trent District

District Chair: Revd Helen R. Kirk

Deputy Chair: Revd Linda J. Catlow

Deputy Chair: Revd Yvonne J. Pearson

Synod Secretary: Mr Ian C. White

Presbyteral Synod Secretary and Assistant Synod Secretary: Revd Jeremy N. Tresise

District Administrator and PA to the Chair: Mr Rob Glassonbury

District Safeguarding Officer: Ms Chris Lewis

The District Centre is based at Broad Lane Methodist Church, Bishops Wood, Nantwich. Through lockdown, the District Administrator has been working from home with core hours of 9:30 to 11:30am weekday mornings and seeking to ensure the smooth running of the District and the support of the Circuits, ministers and lay leaders of the Circuits by providing resources and information and acting as a hub for the life of the District.

Give thanks for:

- the innovative ways that churches and circuits have responded to the Covid-19 pandemic to offer worship, service and care and the numbers of people who have engaged with online worship.

Please pray for:

- the District Officers named above and their faithful ministry;
- all those in leadership positions in our church as they wrestle with the issues raised by the global pandemic;
- the possibilities of new church communities being formed through the “God For All” strategy;
- the District Policy Committee and the District Resourcing for Mission Group (responsible for handling grant requests), the District Safeguarding Board and Safeguarding Officer, the District committees that seek in a variety of ways to support and enable the work of the circuits;
- the Stationing process as the Connexion seeks to continue to cope with the acute shortage of ordained presbyters;
- the continuing exploration of a District link with the Methodist Church in Peru.

Ever present God, your promise is always to be with us.

Help us to recognise your presence in unusual places and unsuspecting people that we might be inspired in our worship, caring, learning, and sharing.

As we seek to walk in the footsteps of Christ rather than in the shadow of our history, may our compass be your unsurpassable love and unquenching hope.

Amen.

DAY 31

The Methodist Connexion

Please pray for:

- The Revd Sonia Hicks, President of the Methodist Conference 2021/2022;
- Barbara Easton, Vice-President of the Methodist Conference 2021/2022;
- The Secretary of Conference, The Revd Dr Jonathan R. Hustler, the Assistant Secretary of Conference The Revd Michaela Youngson, and all who hold Connexional Office;
- the Methodist Conference 2022 in Telford, and all who will plan and lead it;
- The Revd Graham Thompson, President Designate of the Conference in 2022/2023, and Vice-President Designate Anthony Boateng as they prepare for their year of office to start in July 2022;
- members of the Connexional Team based in London and Manchester, and Cliff and Queen's Colleges.



This Prayer Handbook, together with the Connexional Prayer Handbook (copies available from The Methodist Book Centre, Gitana Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 1DY), is an invaluable way of supporting and holding one another in prayer.

It is also a way of discovering the rich fabric of our District, the very many ways in which people are seeking to serve God, and the Spirit-led hopes, dreams and visions being explored and developed.

This Handbook is available electronically on the District Website.

Paper copies can be ordered by post by sending 50p per copy plus 60p P&P to:

The Methodist District Centre, Bishops Wood, Nantwich, CW5 7QD

Prayer Handbook Editor: Mrs Sue Taylor who would welcome any constructive feedback.

Cover Picture: "Happy Jesus – One in Christ"

Artist: Fan Pu, Nanjing, China