

Finding Stillness in Our Faith Journey

In our fast-paced world, filled with constant noise and endless to-do lists, the concept of stillness can feel elusive. Yet, as Christians, we are called to seek moments of quiet reflection and inner peace, trusting that in these moments, we draw closer to God. Stillness is not just the absence of activity but a profound, spiritual practice that nurtures our relationship with the divine.

Biblical Foundations of Stillness

The Bible frequently emphasises the importance of stillness. Psalm 46:10 declares, "Be still, and know that I am God." This verse invites us to pause and recognise God's sovereignty and presence in our lives. Similarly, in the Gospels, we see Jesus often retreating to quiet places to pray and commune with His Father, exemplifying the practice of stillness. In Mark 1:35, it is written, "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed."

These passages highlight that stillness is not passive but an active engagement with God's presence. It is in these quiet moments that we can hear His voice more clearly and align our hearts with His will.

The Spiritual Benefits of Stillness

Engaging in stillness allows us to experience several spiritual benefits. Firstly, it fosters a deeper sense of God's presence. When we quiet our minds and hearts, we become more aware of His nearness and can feel His comforting presence. This

heightened awareness can strengthen our faith, providing reassurance and peace amidst life's challenges.

Secondly, stillness enhances our ability to listen to God. In the hustle and bustle of daily life, it's easy to miss the subtle promptings of the Holy Spirit. By setting aside time for quiet reflection, we create space for God to speak to us. This practice can lead to greater spiritual discernment and clarity in making decisions.

Thirdly, stillness helps us to find rest in God. Jesus invites us in Matthew 11:28, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." Stillness allows us to lay down our burdens and find rest for our souls in His presence. It is a restorative practice that renews our strength and equips us to face the demands of life with renewed vigour.

Practical Steps to Cultivate Stillness

Set Aside Regular Time for Quiet: Dedicate specific times in your day for stillness and prayer. This could be in the early morning, during a lunch break, or before bed. Consistency is key to developing this habit.

Create a Sacred Space: Find a quiet place where you can retreat from distractions. This could be a corner of your home, a spot in nature, or a nearby chapel. Having a designated space helps signal to your mind and body that it's time to be still and focus on God.

Practice Deep Breathing and Centering Prayer: Techniques such as deep breathing and centering prayer can help calm

your mind and body. Centering prayer involves choosing a sacred word or phrase, such as "peace" or "Jesus," and gently focusing on it to bring your attention back to God whenever your mind wanders.

Incorporate Scripture Meditation: Reflect on a specific Bible verse or passage during your time of stillness. Allow the words to resonate in your heart and mind and ask God to reveal His message for you through them.

Be Patient and Persistent: Developing a habit of stillness takes time and patience. It's normal for your mind to wander, especially in the beginning. Gently bring your focus back to God and remember that this practice is a journey, not a destination.

Embracing Stillness in Community

While personal stillness is crucial, it can also be beneficial to practice stillness in community. Consider joining a prayer group or attending a retreat that emphasises quiet reflection. These communal experiences can deepen your sense of connection with others and with God, providing mutual support and encouragement.

In conclusion, in embracing stillness, we open our hearts to the transformative presence of God. It's a practice that nurtures our soul, strengthens our faith, and brings us closer to the divine. As we navigate the complexities of modern life, let us remember the invitation of Psalm 46:10 and make space for stillness, trusting that in those quiet moments, we will come to know God more deeply.

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TOGETHER AT THORNLEIGH

Bethel I.M. Newtown and their church weekend away - 3rd to 5th May 2024



Thirty one members gathered in Grange-over-Sands and celebrated a clear definition of 'Unity', a singleness of heart, melted into one in Jesus. The theme for the days together was 'Crown Him King of Kings', a beautifully crafted programme by Minister Pauline Smith. We were asked to design our own crowns, partly in celebration of King Charles III first anniversary. In competition, Susan (the winner)



with her hand knitted crown, was clearly challenged by Graham's 'Crown Green Bowls', Pauline's 'Ruler' (literally!) and Audrey's 'Queen of Hearts'. We were reminded of earlier weekends away. Kevan adapted an early chorus to include a section thanking new members for their contributions to church life. David Moulson led an interview with one of these, Eileen Smalley, gave us all the opportunity to hear of her life with the Lord.



Her moving description of a time holding the hand of a dying woman, knocked down in a road accident, was followed by an amusing description of a holiday in Ireland, with a donkey. Tears and laughter are the glue of real fellowship.

On Saturday, Pauline's first teaching session, was based on King David who was told at the age of thirteen that he would become king and then only became the actual king in his early thirties. The questions raised were: would we be



able to wait so long for God's plan and then forgiveness? David wasn't a saint, but the Lord forgave his foolish behaviour. Her second session contrasted David's reign with



the one of Ahab, weak and wicked. The story of the four hundred and fifty Baal prophets led to discussion on elements of the story we can reflect on including the very public witness of Elijah.

After an afternoon of free leisure time, we gathered for a time of 'Fellowship and Fun'. It would be wrong to list all items in the concert, in case we lose any members to TV and film agents! Suffice it to say, we had a sketch, a ukulele quartet, piano items, an Elvis choir, poetry readings and gulp, two resident comedians ("We're 'ere all weekend...!"). The goodnight gathering, led by Eileen Melling, considered an analogy first used by a speaker on one of the earlier weekends away. We were asked to picture a football ground, the two teams, the pitch, the terraces and the stands. If 'x' marks the spot, where would we be in terms of personal witness of our king, Jesus? Sunday morning communion was



taken by our minister, Christine Ormerod, who pondered on the King who cares, giving us the inspirational story of a missionary in Taiwan, stolen money and nothing for breakfast but the Lord provided. The final 'Crown Him King of Kings' topic was about David, the shepherd king and his line leading to our glorious saviour, king and shepherd, Jesus Christ.

It was a wonderful weekend, with excellent food and a comfortable setting but, more especially, as stated in 1 Peter 2 verse 17, it was good to 'Show proper respect to everyone' as we were able to 'Love the brotherhood of believers' and to 'Fear God and honour the King'.

David Moulson – Newtown IM



Liz Greenhalgh is continuing to see encouraging progress in the children who attend the after-school programme. She has also been able to give some individual tuition to one boy and one girl who were having particular difficulty. The programme has now taken a break until the Autumn. Along with others from the church Liz has been running a Youth Alpha group over the past few months. One boy from Moldova who is staying for a while with his grandmother gave his life to the Lord and one of the girls wanted to recommit her life to Him. At this time the team are very busy with various summer camps and children's holiday clubs. At the youth camp they will be focusing on the book of Jonah. It was a pleasure recently for Liz to share a word with the beneficiaries of the food canteen. The message concerned the importance of giving our lives to the Lord and growing in our relationship with Him. It was also good to learn that the injury to Liz's leg has now much improved.

Gail and Daniel Castro are grateful to all who continue to uphold them in prayer. Daniel has recently been appointed as OMS UK Ministry Ambassador with the aim of promoting ministry, discipling and church planting throughout the country. They have also been helping out at OMS by providing member care both for missionaries overseas and those at home. Gail has been appointed as Safeguarding Officer for OMS in the UK, supporting in the recruitment and member care, along with Daniel. Her work with the Christian charity "Safe Families" is ongoing and she is currently supporting three families. The planned mission trip to Ecuador this summer has unfortunately been cancelled, owing to unrest in that country. Gail and Daniel hope to be taking part in Annual Meeting as well as the summer OSM event at Northwood.

L. & P. have had a busy few months. They have each visited their families in France and the UK and also made a visit to their former country of ministry in April where they were able to meet up with friends in eight different towns and villages. News there was mixed: there was encouragement on hearing of those coming to the

Lord, but there was also concern at the level of opposition being experienced by the leader of the little group they had been closest to. In their present situation there have also been ups and downs. They spent a blessed time at Easter with a believing couple in an isolated area. L. is progressing well with her online coaching and training. However, P. is experiencing problems with his supervisor over his current plans for his work in the villages. As part of his evaluation of the past 5+ years of his project, he has been interviewing beneficiaries and has been really encouraged by the many positive changes shared with him. By the time you read this many of you may have already met with them during their home visit.

Please note that the OSM summer meeting at the Northwood Centre has now been rescheduled to Saturday, August 3rd at 2pm.

Finally, we thank Anne Stanworth for her long years of serving on the OSM committee and especially her 7 years as Co-Ordinator.. Please remember her in your prayers.

Anne Fambely

From Liz Greenhalgh

Youth

It has been a wonderful time, doing the Youth Alpha together. I am so thankful to the Lord for how everything went and for the way in which He has been touching the lives of the young people.

During the Holy Spirit Day, there were a few that gave testimony the following week, as to what the Lord had done the week earlier. One girl, who has only been coming for around 5 months was crying because of the way the Lord touched her and had answered her prayers. Another boy of 17, gave testimony to how he felt an immense power as He was prayed for. Praise God!

I prayed for a 17 year old girl, who had resentment in her heart. She was able to forgive those who she

needed to forgive and the Lord touched her and she gave testimony to how different she felt afterwards. Praise God for the power of forgiveness!

Another boy of 19, also said how he had been moved by the Lord, during the talk at the front before we started praying. The Lord touched him powerfully and he began to cry. He was sobbing for around 5 minutes as the Lord worked in his heart from some difficult things from the past, related to growing up without a Father. This particular boy was in the town for 3 months, living with his Grandma, but it was great how in that time, he gave his life to the Lord and saw him working.

Two weeks later, the talk was about how Jesus heals. We called



out those people in front with healing needs and asked the others in the group to go and pray with them. We encouraged them that a simple prayer was sufficient, alongside having just a drop of faith that God can. Again we had testimony from a boy that He had been healed of a pain that he had for some time at the top of his leg that was limiting his movement. He was so joyful as he moved his leg to



show us how the pain had completely gone. He shouted, God is good! We were all so encouraged also.

Last week, as we drew to a close of the Youth Alpha course, I asked those in my group for their prayer requests. Two of them said that they want to know the Lord better. One girl said that it helps her so much in her faith, coming to the Friday night youth group. So I was encouraged knowing that the Lord has been working in their hearts in these last few months during the Alpha.

This week we will have 'Youth Alpha; After-party,' a more relaxed time with pizza and volley ball, but also a time to hear from every one of the young people, to hear how God worked, or something new that they learned. I am looking forward to this.



After School

We are coming to the summer and therefore the programme will break until the Autumn. The children have done so well in this last period to work towards some personal goals, so that they can be rewarded with a pizza trip, if they succeed, which all of them will.

One of the girls, Anais, who was really struggling to remember the names of the letters, has learned to

recognise all of them, both upper and lower case, as well as being able to write them. She has almost reached the learning goals for this year's national curriculum for her age. She would definitely have been left behind, without the extra one-to-one support and extra hours put in.

We have one boy, who only comes now and again. It is a sad story, because he is only just turned 7, but often his parents are at work, and it is not uncommon for him to stay home to have to look after his 5 year old sister. There are neighbours who are cousins around that look out for them. It is a complicated situation here.

Whilst we have a policy that if the child doesn't really attend the programme, we will eventually offer the place to another child, but for this boy, I sense that the Lord is putting him on my heart to still take him, even if it is just now and again, because of his need to experience the love of God.

On one occasion, a child's book from Ellel, that has a great message about how we all have value, presented in a fun way, but then also a chance to talk to him about the Lord and pray with him. I could see how the Lord was touching him and how he was so sincere in wanting to receive prayer. Some of these kids have it so tough, right from the start. Unsafe backgrounds, abuse, etc.

One of our staff members, who I have mentioned before, who suffers a lot from anxiety, who joined our team in September, is making progress. She has a lot of insecurities, but she was recently encouraged, when she realised that the work that she had been doing with



one of the children, was paying off and that the child was making progress. Please pray for her, to be completely free from the things that she is struggling with.

Canteen

Over Easter, which for us was 5 May, we had an Easter celebration a few days earlier with all of the beneficiaries invited. I was on the children's spot and felt that the Lord put on my heart the verse, 'He came to serve and not to be served.' I was thankful for creativity from the Lord and the children enjoyed learning about the story of how Jesus washed the disciples feet and despite being a king, He was the greatest servant of all.



It was a pleasure to recently share a word with the beneficiaries from the canteen. The Lord put on my heart about how important it is to live out life according to the word of God, using the verse that talks about doing what the word of God says, not just hearing in, found in James 1. Many of them have heard the gospel many times, with some of them having made commitments and also getting baptised.

I always believe that it is important to seek the Lord, especially when speaking to a group of people, to see what He has on His heart at the moment for this particular group.

I talked initially about how we all need to grow in relationship with the Lord and come to know Him after making a commitment to Him, otherwise the relationship will die, as with any relationship, if communication were to cease and they were encouraged that one way they can do this to is to spend time in the word, before talking about doing what it says, not just reading about. It went well, praise the Lord and one lady wanted to take one of our Bibles home.

Prayer

- Thanks and praise for God's goodness and for the way in which He has worked in the hearts of the young people during this time.
- Thanks and praise for the progress that the After school kids have made.
- Prayer for the youth and the programmer from September, as we seek to lead them forward spiritually. To find the right material to disciple them.
- Also, for the summer camp

with the youth in July. That the Lord will speak powerfully to them.

- That each of the youth will continue to grow in personal relationship with the Lord
- For the youth team, to remain united
- For the children's camps to go well and that the children will be impacted.

Thank you for continued prayers and support!

Liz Greenhalgh

Fellowship and Bible Conference 19th/ 20th April 2024

"The Invisible Hand of God as found in the Book of Esther"



Speakers — Paul Baxendale, Full time Teaching Elder Parr Street Church, Kendal Garstang Country Hotel Chairman & Roger Stone, Connexional President Elect.

Held at Garstang Country Hotel and Golf Centre which is a lovely setting with friendly staff and good food, was the venue for this year's. Paul broke down the 10 Chapters of the Book of Esther into four sessions.

Session 1 - "Questing the Hand of God", [Esther 1 & 2]: Paul very ably set the scene for us, comparing and contrasting Biblical customs and practices with some of today's.

Session 2 - "Trusting the Hand of God", [Esther 3 & 4]: This session reinforced the belief that there is no such thing as "blind chance" or "accidental coincidence" - God is in control and has a plan, illustrated through the use of His faithful servants Esther and Mordecia.

Session 3 - "Seeing the Hand of God", [Esther 5 - 7]: Again, we see

God quietly working, giving Esther courage and Mordecia intelligence culminating in their enemies Haman and his followers fulfilling their own downfall.

Session 4 - "Celebrating the Hand of God", [Esther 8 - 10]: As a result of the tables being turned and the enemies being defeated, many non-Jewish people became followers of God. God is very powerful — His enemies will not win — Satan's

plans will not succeed. Nothing can separate us from the love of God.

The weekend, away from the "hurley burly of everyday life" gave me an opportunity to make new friends and reconnect with old ones. Mostly it provided time to study, to learn and to listen to God's word and to meet in Fellowship around the Lord's Table.



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From Lego to craft work – Mount Zion reaches children

A church which began when a teacher started a school for children in 1878 is still making efforts to reach local children with a string of meetings and events for the young.



Mount Zion Church, Cliviger, manages to attract dozens of youngsters, plus parents, grandparents or carers, to a series of regular and irregular activities.

The event with the lowest attendance is the Sunday Club session in conjunction with the Sunday morning service. With a mixed age range and numbers varying from a handful to more than a dozen, leaders have to be prepared to deal with all ages on an irregular basis.

But other regular events for toddlers to teenagers are well attended, numbers often in contrast to the fact that the Parish of Cliviger has only about 2,500 residents.

Little Stars, for pre-school children, provides a very busy environment with between 20 and 40 children, plus as many adults, who all look to enjoy themselves every Wednesday.

A games evening, usually held once a month, attracts 40-plus of



all ages and offers a broad range of activities from chess, to table tennis, jigsaw puzzles and a range of books.

And a more recent activity on the agenda has been Lego Church. The first such event drew more than 50 young people and adults, all seated at small tables, each table with a box of Lego bricks. That was in December last year but subsequent Lego Church meetings have shown it is a popular means of attracting young and old.

Craft afternoons – usually at Easter and Christmas – have also proved popular with a mixed-age attendance of children and adults creating a varied range of products from greeting cards, to decorating biscuits, and colouring stories relating to the season among other things. The recent Easter event some children, helped a little by parents or grandparents, made picturesque crosses. Easter bunnies, and Easter cards as well as decorating biscuits using edible extras, and then enjoyed a sing-along led by Alan Scholes on his ukulele, and Pauline Scholes on the piano, to highlight the season.



“It was a treat to watch the children hard at work and each enjoying creating many items which could be taken home to highlight the Easter message,” said Susan Hartley, one of the church leaders.

“There was also plenty to eat – including hot cross buns – and drinks during the afternoon with many adults joining in the fun and each

child received an Easter egg.”

Refreshments, in fact, have been a feature in all the various activities from Little Stars to Lego Church. “We provide a wide range of these events, and each manages to attract a regular group, encouraged in many cases by the parents or carers,” said Susan.



“Fortunately, members of the church run these events and provide a very broad range of attractions which seem to suit the young people in the village. Getting young people on a Sunday morning is always difficult with so many other attractions on offer – such as football teams for the lads and girls are involved in a number of similar sports these days all of which tend to operate on Sundays.

“But in a small village with a limited number of children I think we do extremely well to attract as many as we do with our superb range of events.”

Dave Hall - Cliviger



From the Connexion

MAY CONNEXIONAL COMMITTEE ROUND-UP

By Alison Tipping, Medlock Valley Circuit Representative

Connexional Committee 18th May 2024 - Atherton

The meeting was chaired by Dorothy Kendrick as President, and we were welcomed by John Barlow, on behalf of Atherton Church. There was a lengthy discussion following on from the Connexional meetings held on 27th April. A report on the meetings and some further information on some next steps will be sent out to churches prior to Annual Meeting.

General Secretary's Report

The General Secretary attended the Congregational Federation's Annual Assembly in May, and it was agreed that they be invited to attend our Annual Meeting, as they have in the past. High Legh Christian Fellowship have made a request to become a Mission Church, and a positive meeting had been held with them regarding this.

Overseas Missions Report

L and P plan to visit some of our churches in July this year and will hopefully be in these areas on the following dates, 4th- 9th East Midlands, 11th- 13th Sunderland, 17th- 19th Northwest, 19th- 24th South of England. Liz Greenhalgh went over on her ankle whilst playing football with the after-school kids and has been using crutches and an orthopaedic boot and has since done further damage to her ankle after a fall. She is still helping with the youth (just sat on a chair) and on one of the after-school sessions. Please pray for a good recovery and that there will be no long-term problems. Daniel and Gail Castro continue to serve God through OMS by providing member care both for overseas missionaries and those at home. As times change, their mission is responding to the reality that Great Britain is rapidly becoming as much of a missionary field as it has been a missionary force, and that there is a desperate need for missionaries 'at home' as much as for those going to other

parts of the world. They are helping to explore ways in which OMS can start disciple making initiatives within the UK. There are plans to meet with them both to find out more about their current work. An Overseas Missions event is to be held at Northwood on Saturday 13th July, when Daniel and Gail, and L and P will be in attendance. The Connexional Donations for all our missionaries were agreed for the coming year.

Finance Committee

The accountants have completed the year end accounts and these are being passed for examination, before being submitted to the Charities Commission and Companies House, and a budget for 2024 is to be prepared. The final settlement for Croxton Church is being delayed because of legal matters in relationship to the Church graveyard. It is currently in the hands of the solicitors. The Finance Committee want to encourage churches, who need funding to enhance their vision, or opportunities for outreach to the community in which God has placed them, to put in grant requests so that funding can be used wisely. It was agreed that in future any grant applications should be sent to the Resource Centre in the first instance.

Administration Group

Kathy Pringle has now returned from maternity leave and has resumed work as Connexional Services Manager, working three days a week (Monday to Wednesday). In particular, Kathy has been dealing with financial matters and is working closely with Alan Britton, our Financial Administrator, processing invoices and payments. Laura Pendlebury is now working as Association Manager and is the primary contact for the Connexion magazine as well as other matters. Buckley Street Church closed at the beginning of March and two churches in the Warrington area are interested in purchasing the

property.

Northwood Centre

High Legh Christian Fellowship are continuing to use the Centre every Sunday, Tuesday and Wednesday and every Bank Holiday weekend, with the hire agreement still being finalised. Additional ideas are being looked at to replace the work David Okell has done over the years, voluntarily. Most urgently a gardener. The remaining responsibilities are going to come under Laura Pendlebury's remit at the office.

Church Support Group

The group are continuing to support churches with practical support in various forms, as well as visiting church services and coffee mornings, which gives opportunities for talking with members. Joy is working with churches who have high utility bills, and Churches are requesting first aid training and website training, plus computer training for officers and ministers. Churches are being encouraged to apply for appropriate small grants which are available through Church Support, such as development grants, or to support Holiday Bible Clubs and small evangelistic events. Chris Elsdon has been meeting with churches to set up websites, as well as continuing with the Connexional Website.

Ecumenical Officer Report

Bill Hampson has attended the latest Free Churches Group meeting. The 'Thy Kingdom Come' global prayer network took place between the 9th and 19th of May 2024.

Ministry Committee Report

Changing circumstances within some of our churches has prompted a fresh look at whether (or how) we record names of people with accredited ministry from other denominations. After consideration, the Ministry Committee recommends that the ministerial status of a minister from

another denomination be recognised by being included in the Independent Methodist Directory of Ministers with a note to the effect, 'Recognised as an accredited minister within the ___ Church.' The discussion also stimulated the consideration of accredited ministers on the 'Emeritus List' (no longer active in ministry) and who find themselves no longer members of an Independent Methodist Church because their church has been closed. The Ministry Committee have considered the relevant issues and would recommend that in such cases, the name of the minister is retained on the Emeritus List with a note to the effect: 'Endorsed by the former congregation of ___ Independent Methodist Church.' There are three ministers currently eligible for long-service recognition this year, one for 60 years and two for 25 years.

Education Organisers Report

All current assessors have confirmed their willingness to continue in the role. Where we have vacancies (other than IM specific modules) these will be filled by external assessors beginning with Richard Saunders-Hindley and specifically for Church History. All four students had a group online tutorial with Richard in April, and between the Education Organiser and Richard, all students will be supported as

they complete their year of study. Once their current year of study is completed, Richard will assume the full role of Tutor. Two delegates attended the AWE Academy event entitled 'Growing Disciples, Growing Churches!' at Barnsley in March which was very well received. As Richard Saunders-Hindley leads this work and is now engaged with us as a Tutor and an Assessor, the expectation is that they will be able to offer us bespoke courses and training opportunities going forward.

Enabling Group

The group have given time and consideration to the proposed new website and work being done on it by Chris Elsdon. Concern was expressed about who would be seeing the logo which has to reflect us as a national body and mainstream denomination. Therefore, it is important that the impression created is of a body of people – not a group of individuals which I'M Connexion could give. Work began on reviewing our Risk Register, which included the aspect of appointing a new Data Protection person following the resignation of Alan Harrison from this post. We are not required to appoint a Trustee for this task and so an employee could be appointed as our Data Protection Officer. Administration processes have been particularly affected following the pandemic, and

individual officers have been dealing with office and church closures, arrangements for staff working from home, staff changes and seeking to provide suitable training for our Resource Centre Managers who are taking on new roles and responsibilities. Some churches and individuals have expressed their frustrations with lack of responses to requests and queries, and these issues are being addressed. One of the main aims of the Enabling Group Team is to work together collaboratively, sharing information among the officers so each committee can be made aware of what is happening across the Connexion of churches without being solely dependent on the President and/or General Secretary for information. This is still a work in progress and its success is obviously reliant upon committees being willing to both share their work and to work together rather than operating in isolation.

Safeguarding Report

The Safeguarding Team have continued to support the churches during the past three months and are also attempting to set up our own database for Ministers and churches with regard to DBS Applications.

Alison Tipping, Medlock Valley Circuit Rep.

OUR PRESIDENTIAL VISIT

It is always good to welcome our President to the Bristol circuit, as we did on 27th/28th April, for a weekend of friendship and fellowship. It was good to see Dorothy once again and this time she brought Shaun Newton with her.

On the Saturday we all gathered together at Mill Lane for a service which Dorothy led. Her message gave us much to think about and we sang a hymn that some of us didn't know, which was lovely, as it is always good to learn new things.

This was followed by the Connexional meeting. The outcome being that that we wanted to stay as In-

dependent Methodists, but with some changes. We then all shared in a lovely meal. On Sunday morning we gathered at Staple Hill, where Shaun opened the service with Dorothy giving another inspiring message, giving us much to discuss over lunch.

They then travelled on to West Camel, where Shaun took the afternoon service and of course, there was a tea to follow. All too soon our time together was at an end, but what lovely friendships we now have. So much talking, eating and messages to remember.

We all thank Dorothy and Shaun



for taking the time to visit us and we hope that they enjoyed the visit as much as we did. We pray that whatever they both do in the future, that the Lord will be with them and guide them.

Dave Chapple—Warmley

Leadership during 'discontinuous change'



I love to meander through Margaret Wheatley's book 'Who do we choose to be?'. She writes on leadership with creativity and honesty, it's a joyful refreshing read. When I'm in need of wind over my burning embers, this is one of the books I turn to. It can be read in bite-size chunks over a cup of coffee or absorbed in a quiet room with the door shut. It speaks to this moment of change and disruption that both the church and the world is in. Leaning on her own experience from working with leaders who operate in chaos, Wheatley inspires the reader to be who they need to be in this moment of time. Quoting Howard Zinn she writes in her first pages; "We don't have to wait for some grand utopian future. The future in an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvellous victory."

She tells the story of General Gordon R. Sullivan, the Army Chief of Staff in the United States, during the Vietnam War era. His role included adapting how the military operated and leading them into the future. Apparently, Sullivan spent 50% of his time thinking about the future, because he had the defence of the free world on his shoulders. Reflecting on this practice, Wheatley asks "how many leaders under-

stand how to step off the arrow of time and consciously engage with the future so as to influence its direction, not with complex strategies but by using information well?" Does this resonate with you? I feel like this is what leaders in the church are having to do at the moment, using the information we have to step off the 'arrow of time' and to engage with the future. Perhaps this is something that all leaders are called to do, but some manage it better than others.

Roxburgh and Romanuk call the season we are in a season of 'discontinuous change'. Continuous change is when we know what the new might be and as such can prepare ourselves, whereas discontinuous change is when we don't know what that change will be, the future in unpredictable. During discontinuous change leaders and churches need to be adaptable. A time of discontinuous change is a challenge to those who have learnt to lead in one way and have been

doing so for a while. Without the skills for the new environment, leadership becomes daunting and often overwhelming. For others who have learnt to lead during discontinuous change, this season feels a little like home, and the challenge of discontinuous change is, ironically, familiar ground.

I find those leaders in our Hubs, and in the many conversations that I engage in through RM. I am encouraged that God, as expected, is working in and through his Church during this transformative moment. Thank you for all the hard work you are already doing. Keep paying attention to the season we are in, adapting and changing as the new arrives, and keep living in a manner that prepares yourself and others for that future.

Jo Allen – Rural Ministries



Connexion

The magazine of the family of Independent Methodist Churches

The last day for articles to be submitted for the September / October issue of the Connexion magazine is 12th August. The theme for this issue will be 'Humility'. Please could all articles be sent either directly to the Resource Centre via post, or by email to magazine@imchurches.org.uk. Just a quick reminder that ideally all photographs need to be digital. Do ensure that safeguarding principles are followed by asking permission for the publication of any photographs and for the articles where people are named and/or can be identified.

Thank you for all the articles – please keep them coming!

A beautiful place with lots of kindness

It's Lilian Kearsley's 80th birthday and she's spending the day at one of her favourite places: Wigan and Leigh Hospice.

Lilian is one of the charity's longest serving volunteers, with an impressive 27 years of service at the hospice's base in Hindley.

After a busy morning shift answering phones on reception, she finally takes some time to have a cup of tea and slice of birthday cake.

"Everyone here is so kind and friendly," Lilian tells Borough Life. "You really are part of the team."

The hospice opened in 1983 and offers care for those who have been diagnosed with a life limiting illness, and support for their families and friends.

Over the years, Lilian, who lives in Hindley, has taken on different roles including supporting events, visiting patients, secretarial tasks, and helping with activities such as card making and flower arranging classes.

"I love being able to speak with the patients. Being here is also a good reminder that there are often people who might be in a more difficult situation than you are.

"If I'm worrying about having backache or this and that, I come here, and it can help put my problems into perspective."

"I like how peaceful it is here," she adds. "Especially in the gardens. It's a place where I can come just for me, to get a bit of peace and independence. "Things have changed a lot since I first started volunteering here, but it's always meant so much to me."

Wigan and Leigh Hospice relies on more than 400 volunteers like Lilian.

Around 300 work in the charity's 10 shops, but there is always a wide range of roles available.

Care is taken to match a volunteer's skills or interests with the right option for them, whether that is supporting the IT team, or helping to maintain the beautiful gardens.

Joan Rosen, from Abram, has been a volunteer at Wigan and Leigh Hospice for two years.

"Being a volunteer is also very freeing because I'm choosing to be here. That's not to say I don't work hard, sometimes the staff have to tell me to go home! But I'm doing it for me, so it feels different to having a job.

"Some people think of hospices as being places where people go to die, so they assume it will be miserable, but it's not like that. It's a beautiful place with lots of kindness. Volunteering here has changed my life."

"I've always been a do-er and one day I was driving to the shops, and I saw the sign for the hospice and decided to call in and ask if they needed any volunteers. I'm so glad I did.

"I used to be a boss, I used to make big decisions in work, but as

you get older and everything changes, you start to think you're useless at everything. Being here has given me my confidence back. It's completely changed the way I think and feel."

Joan largely supports the fundraising team, who need to generate £12,000 per day to fund the services the hospice offers.

"I realised I could help the fundraising team with practical tasks, so that they could focus on bigger projects. So, I do anything that's needed, from putting things in envelopes, to helping at events, but I'm very much treated as an important part of the team.

"Being a volunteer is also very freeing because I'm choosing to be here. That's not to say I don't work hard, sometimes the staff have to tell me to go home! But I'm doing it for me, so it feels different to having a job.

"Some people think of hospices as being places where people go to die, so they assume it will be miserable, but it's not like that. It's a beautiful place with lots of kindness. Volunteering here has changed my life."

Published for Wigan Borough Life



HEAR HOW FAITH IN GOD HAS CHANGED THEIR LIVES

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OVERSEAS MISSIONS SUMMER EVENT

COME ALONG TO HEAR MORE ABOUT THE WORK OF OUR MISSIONARIES AND HOW TO SUPPORT THEM

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All articles for the magazine
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 Resource Centre postal
 address or via email to
 magazine@imchurches.org.uk

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Independent Methodist Churches
 www.imchurches.org.uk

AMENDED DATE

WHERE:
 The Northwood Christian Centre
 Northwood Lane,
 High Legh,
 Knutsford,
 Cheshire
 WA16 0QX

WHEN:
 Saturday 3rd August at 2pm

CONTACT:
 Carrie O'Nions
 om.organisereimchurches.org.uk

It would be great to see you there!

PUZZLE CORNER

RESTFULNESS	SERENITY	QUIETNESS	SERENENESS
QUIET	TRANQUILLITY	QUIETUDE	CALM
SILENCE	PEACEFULNESS	HUSH	STILL
PLACIDITY	LULL	REPOSE	PAUSE
HARMONY	COMITY	CONCORD	

A	Q	S	O	K	G	B	P	W	W	Q	I	R	G	P	M	X	Z	N	Y
C	B	I	K	T	C	R	E	P	O	S	E	C	R	M	O	W	I	I	X
O	R	L	Y	S	N	V	H	P	X	Q	W	B	D	P	X	M	S	O	J
M	O	E	A	T	Y	G	I	E	Q	O	H	U	S	H	X	L	S	A	Y
I	S	N	N	I	I	S	J	O	B	Z	B	C	F	D	T	A	E	V	M
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D	G	O	K	M	B	I	S	C	A	H	D	O	E	C	I	B	N	G	F
A	R	C	F	Q	X	O	T	D	E	D	U	T	E	I	U	Q	P	M	J