

Connexion

The Magazine of the Hazel Grove and Poynton Methodist Churches

March 2015– May 2015



“²⁴ Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”

(Matthew 16:24-25)

Come and discover the ‘good news’ that is happening in Hazel Grove, Dialstone Lane, Windlehurst, Offerton, Poynton and Green Close Methodist churches and the surrounding communities.



The calling of the Methodist Church

The Church exists for:

Worship: *to increase awareness of God's presence and to celebrate God's love*

Learning and Caring: *to help people to learn and grow as Christians through mutual support and care*

Service: *to be a good neighbour to people in need and challenge injustice*

Evangelism: *to make more followers of Jesus Christ*

Priorities for the Methodist Church

In partnership with others wherever possible, the Methodist Church will concentrate its prayers, resources, imagination and commitments

- to proclaim and affirm its conviction of God's love in Christ, for us and for all the world.
 - to renew confidence in God's presence and action in the world and in the Church.

As ways towards realising this priority, the Methodist Church will give particular attention to:

- underpinning everything we do with God-centred worship and prayer;
- supporting community development and action for justice, especially among the most deprived and poor - in Britain and worldwide;
- developing confidence in evangelism and in the capacity to speak of God and faith in ways that make sense to all involved;
 - encouraging fresh ways of being Church;
- nurturing a culture in the Church which is people-centred and flexible.

Our Calling



Mumblings from the Ministers

Dear friends,

The time between Christmas and the beginning of Lent varies from year to year depending on the date of Easter – but sometimes the space between preparing Advent Courses and Lent Courses seems very short! Not everyone is able to attend house groups or study groups, but I am aware that there are those who would like to attend groups who feel that there isn't anything suitable available where they are. One of the strengths of our Methodist structure is that we're not tied to buildings: whatever is happening in the Circuit is open to everyone, and friends! Granted, a house group may run out of chairs, so it may be worth checking with the host before you invite all your neighbours – but what a joyous problem that would be!

Over the coming weeks there will be a variety of courses and study days, as well as different acts of worship, that will help us prepare for and engage with the Lenten journey towards Easter Day; a journey during which we explore the many ways in which we are called to follow Christ. There will be Ash Wednesday services and Lent groups but also opportunities to share in art exhibitions, film nights, and forums that will help us engage with the issues that concern us relating to the forthcoming election.

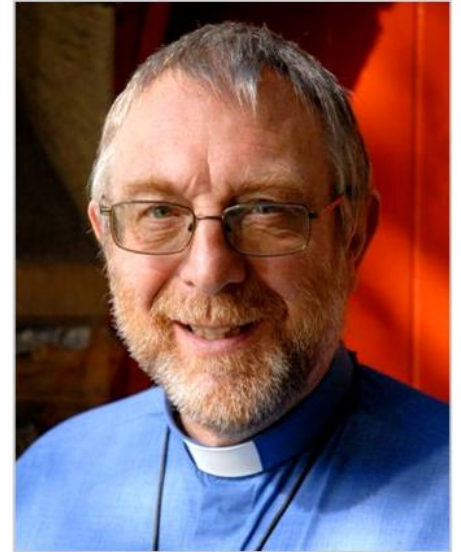
When you receive your membership tickets – and if you're not a member have a look at someone else's – you will see that as Christians within the Methodist tradition we are committed to Worship, Service, Evangelism and Learning & Caring. When it comes to Learning & Caring we tend to be very good at the caring bit but not so committed to the learning – yet we are all of us called to grow in faith.

We are really blessed in this Circuit that so many great things are happening: don't miss out because something isn't in "your" church. That also means that we need to make sure that everyone has the information they need, and the easiest way to do that is to circulate posters, details etc. through the office at Poynton.

As a staff team we look forward to sharing the Lenten journey with you and to celebrating the joy of Easter Day! Grace & Peace, Mandy



It is with tremendous sadness and great shock that we have recently received news of the unexpected death of former minister in the Hazel Grove and Poynton circuit, Reverend Tim Hall. Tim was suddenly taken ill with heart failure whilst on holiday with his wife Ann in South Africa and despite the efforts of paramedics, he died on Saturday 31st January 2015.



Tim became a local preacher in the Alderley Edge and Knutsford circuit and went on to candidate for the Methodist Ministry. He trained at Queen's College, the joint Anglican/Methodist theological college in Edgbaston, Birmingham and in 1990 took his first appointment in the Hazel Grove and Poynton Circuit. Here are some personal and collective reflections on Tim's ministry during his time with us here in this circuit. The collection of 'speech bubbles' are from the congregation at Dialstone Lane.

The Book of Ecclesiastes tells us that there is a time for everything under the heavens and sadly this is the time for Tim to pass to glory. There was another time and season in his life though which myself and several others will be eternally grateful for. It was a time which saw a wind of change, a fresh out pouring of the Holy Spirit, affecting many people and bringing them into a closer and deeper relationship with Jesus.

Tim along with Peter Bedford and Stuart Earl all arrived in the circuit around the same time – God's timing is wonderful. Together they were inspired by the Alpha course and I and many others from Hazel Grove came to a new understanding of faith through its sessions. Often we would meet at the manse on Mile End Lane, where Tim and Ann provided wonderful hospitality and even let us use their pans to make music to the Lord. We worshipped, prayed and developed our faith on those evenings which even now, so many years later, we all remember with such joy.

The Sunday supplement service at Hazel Grove came to be another time when Tim would encourage our faith always with humour and sensitivity. In fact my first memory of meeting Tim was at his first service at Hazel Grove and he opened his sermon with a joke, – but I have never forgotten it and there are not many sermons you can say that about! He was a larger than life character in every way, and together with Ann made a fantastic team. We had wonderful times at Spring Harvest and it was through his initiative that the fore runner to this circuit newsletter known as "Live Wire" came into being.

Everyone who looks back on their faith journey will have people who have made a difference, people who have inspired them and encouraged them and I know that I and so many others are grateful that we knew Tim.



I recall that Tim said once that he couldn't wait to get to heaven because there he would be able to fly unencumbered and now that just conjures up a wonderful image!

This may be a time to mourn but it also a time to dance and to rejoice in the fact that we were privileged to share our lives with him. Rest in peace Tim for surely yours has been a race well run. **Marilyn Gregory**

I can only agree wholeheartedly with the above. As a layworker in the Circuit at this time I became a colleague of Tim. May I share with you two moments I will never forget. I remember the Alpha taster the staff all went to in Salford – we had to queue to get into the Church! Peter, Tim and Stuart were all greatly affected by the presence of the Holy Spirit. This was new ground for me and I was bemused to say the least. My faith was tested – it was as though there was a battle going on inside my head – “You do believe; no, you don't, yes you do!” Did I even believe in God anymore?

The following day I walked through Torkington Park to Hazel Grove's prayer group. It was one of those beautiful Autumn mornings when the trees glistened in their Autumn glory. How could I not believe in God surrounded by all this beauty? At the prayer group I explained how I felt – I was met with sheer love - no condemnation just Christian understanding. I then went to Tim and Ann's for lunch.

Tim greeted me at the door saying Ann was delayed and would be in a hurry because of afternoon commitments. My heart sank. When she arrived she greeted me with – “My appointments this afternoon have all cancelled! I'm in no rush.” (thank you God!) Gradually over lunch I explained how I felt and they prayed with me. Let's just say chains that were entrapping me snapped and I went home a very different person. It would be a few years later that God showed me what those chains had been.

My other memory is when Peter had a heart attack, was awaiting angioplasty and I received news that I had breast cancer. My world seemed to be falling apart. It was Tim who phoned just before my operation asking me if I would like to receive Communion. The presence of the Spirit bringing me consolation, hope and strength was tangible.

Ann, (now a student Minister) by wearing her dog collar, managed to get into the clinic where I was receiving pre op treatment and in the middle of the waiting room we quietly prayed together, much to the bemusement of the staff. Thank you Tim and Ann for living your faith – I will always be so grateful that I knew you. **Mandy Hawkyard**

Tim went on to an appointment in the Wigan Circuit where he served for 11 years and had currently been serving in the Southport Circuit since 2008. We hold in our prayers his wife Ann, and his children Charlotte, James, Andrew, Christine and Beth.

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Tim was an inspirational minister full of enthusiasm and desire to share the depth of his love and faith.

My family and I have such fond and wonderful memories of The Halls. We were so extremely sad to hear about Tim's passing and we send our prayers and thoughts out to them all

I'll always remember the Person to Person, when he asked us to pray for non-believers, which seemed at first so difficult to do.

His brilliant portrayal of Willy Wonka in Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, The Scarecrow in The Wizard of Oz and many other roles that he played in our DATE

Such a special man. He helped me in so many ways – practical, emotional and spiritual

A lovely person who made me feel always welcome

I remember when Tim visited Offerton before he joined the Circuit, bearded and carrying a doll. His children and Ann followed shortly

With Tim, I constantly and simultaneously felt challenged and supported - and this by someone who had taken the time and trouble to know me. He cared about things that were important - and therefore I wanted to care too.

He encouraged everyone to pray more, and to have a close relationship with the Lord: his ministry with us was indeed a blessing. May he now be at peace with the heavenly King

Such a kind, caring person and a big, broad shoulder to rest your head on

Even though he was ill, he had sympathy for a fellow sufferer.

“New Minister’ allays concerns for continuing dramatic productions!” From stage crew to starring roles - hilarious to poignant, Tim’s Willy Wonka, Postman, Scarecrow, Reuben gave inspiration and enjoyment to all. Emotionally challenging for Tim was ‘Peter’ in ‘Daybreak’. Tim’s “stony ground” was the stuff of great foundations. Wonderful memories of our Minister and Friend foundations.

My lasting impression of Tim is of someone who was unfailingly enthusiastic and engaged

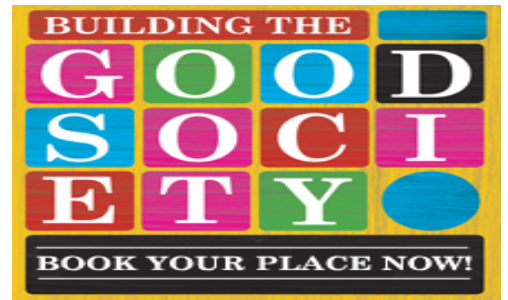
His passion, energy and enthusiasm. His love, care and concern for us all. I remember him cycling around the church one Christmas morning on a new bike someone had bought to show. He bought fun to our Church along with a deep faith and commitment to sharing that faith with all who knew him. I feel very blessed to have known him.

My daughter and son-in-law remember how he officiated at their wedding and made it such a special occasion

Tim was a great friend and brother that we had the wonderful privilege to meet and know while at Dialstone Lane and long afterwards. Our love and prayers are with Ann and the family.

Tim Hall
RIP

On 9th May this year there will be a General Election. The people of Britain are charged with an important decision, regarding who should represent us in parliament for the next five years. This event gives us an opportunity to reflect, with our local communities, about what we want for our society.



- What makes a good society?
- What does "success" look like in a good society?
- How do we address issues about health, well-being and care?
- What are our responsibilities?
- What about money, tax, debt, wealth and poverty?
- Does faith contribute to a good society?
- How far are the priorities of the candidates standing in the General Election consistent with our vision?



Churches together in Britain and Ireland have produced resources to enable communities to get together and consider these issues, in the run up to the general election.

At Dialstone Lane we are planning two open meetings, The first on Saturday 28th February 10-12:30 will include a keynote speech to introduce these ideas.

Niall Cooper, the Director of Church Action on Poverty, has been invited. This will give us an opportunity to reflect on the issues about a good society, and set out our priorities and values. A second meeting will be held closer to the election on Saturday 18th April, when we will invite candidates to respond to our ideas about a Good Society. There would be an opportunity to ask questions and further discuss our values, in the light of the stance taken by the various parties.

These will be open meetings, so everyone is very welcome to attend. Further information and confirmation of dates/times, will be available from Dialstone Lane nearer the time. Like our Facebook page, or look out for our printed notices for up to date information. Contact **Liz Delafield** or **Andy Stoker** for further details.

Running alongside these meeting during Lent, Poynton Methodist Church will be engaging with some of the major topics that will dominate the forthcoming election via a series of themed Sunday morning services. Why not come along and begin to ponder how your faith might affect how and who you vote for.

- 15th Feb **What makes a good society?**
- 22nd Feb **Are you tempted (not to vote)**
- 1st March **Health and social welfare**
- 8th March **Immigration**
- 15th March **The family**
- 22nd March **Money and the economy**
- 29th March **What kind of King?**

On the road with the Vice President



November was a very busy month! In mid- November I led a retreat in the Abbey Centre on Iona. There were 15 participants, from Britain, USA and Finland. Together we studied the life of St Francis of Assisi, whose story has many parallels with the story of Iona. Francis felt called by God to rebuild a ruined church on the outskirts of Assisi. Before long he had gathered many followers and this became the nucleus of the Franciscan community of monks.

In the 1930s George McLeod felt called to take ministers and labourers from Glasgow to rebuild the ruined Abbey on Iona and this became the nucleus of the present-day Iona Community. Both men were, of course, called to rebuild the church in more than just wood and stones, but in Spirit too, and both movements have made major contributions to Christianity. In the retreat we looked at three themes from the life of Francis: the humanity of Christ, a love of creation, and the preaching of the word, and related them to our own lives and experience.

I was no sooner back from Iona than I was on my way to another island, but a very different one: Haiti. We were the guests of the Methodist Church of Haiti. I preached at one of the churches in Port au Prince on the first Sunday morning, and told them a bit about Iona, and how cold and dark it is at that time of year, compared with Haiti where the temperature was in the 30's centigrade!

It is now 5 years since the terrible earthquake devastated that part of Haiti, and there is still much rebuilding to be done. One of the things the Methodist church is involved in is the provision of healthcare, and as a pharmacist I was very pleased to get involved, if only briefly, in the setting up of medicines management systems to serve the chain of village clinics administered by their local circuits.

After a brief lull in December, I began the New Year by making my official visit to the Manchester and Stockport District! I preached at Manley Park in the Manchester circuit, and at a District service at Knutsford. We had a guided tour of the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes (TMCP) and also Methodist Insurance offices in Manchester.

Then it was off to the Channel Islands for a 5-day visit. I was taken to Jersey, to do Local Preachers training, then to Alderney to preach. On Alderney we celebrated the 60th anniversary of the ordination of Rev Arthur Mignot, a very well known and well-loved figure on the island. We sang a hymn he had composed, and afterwards shared in a wonderful cake!

On Sark we visited the island school (30 pupils), who fired questions at the President and me, and then joined in some Godly play, reconstructing the Jerusalem Temple with cardboard boxes and a lot of glue. Then to Guernsey, where it was a great honour both to meet the first minister and also to have lunch at Government House with the Lieutenant Governor!

As I write this I am on my way to Hull for a visit to the York and Hull District, and a visit to Sheffield follows the next weekend. The road goes ever on! **Gill Dascombe**



I remember the dramatic moment in the Kirk Douglas film when the Roman authorities face Spartacus and his fellow gladiator/slaves, demanding that Spartacus reveal himself so that they could arrest him. After a tense pause, a man steps forward: "I'm Spartacus!" Then another: "I'm Spartacus". Then one after another, "I'm Spartacus"

Last week, as I write, two terrorists killed members of the staff on the French satirical magazine, Charlie Hebdo. It was a challenge to the very values that undergird French society. They were saying to the nation: "Step forward if you support what this magazine represents, and we will kill you too."

In the next two days, literally millions of people came on to the streets, proclaiming: "Je suis Charlie!" On social media, from all over the world, people posted the message: "Je suis Charlie", "I am Charlie!"

Many people interviewed on the streets said "it is a war". The French prime minister said, "We are at war. Not against Islam, but against extremism." Certainly all the TV images that day were of a city at war. The clashing symphony of police sirens; the disturbing crack of rifle shots; the sight of people being brutally executed, of women and children cowering in fear on a supermarket floor.

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As I watched these events unfold, I wanted to shout out “I am Charlie, too”. The values under attack are my values. They are Christian values, as I understand Christianity. And in my experience, they are the values of Muslims I have known, and Jews, and Buddhists, and humanists.

So, if I am part of this war I must recognise what is the enemy.

The enemy is not faith, it is fanaticism. In whatever forms it takes, fanaticism is the enemy of faith. When it goes under the guise of religion, it is particularly destructive. It turns religion into that which distorts, rather than reveals, the face of God. When it invades the Christian religion, it turns the Gospel on its head.

We, ordinary members of the Hazel Grove and Poynton Methodist circuit, must engage in the fight. *We are Charlie!* We are against fanaticism.

But hang on! Is fanaticism too close for comfort?

Is it fanaticism to insist on one interpretation only of the Bible?

Or one style of worship above all others?

Or the exclusion of women from the priesthood, or the episcopacy?

Or the exclusion from Holy Communion, of millions of fellow Christians because they don't belong to the one true Church?

Or to deny fellowship to thousands because we don't approve of their sexuality?

And that's not to mention the political fanaticism, which is blind to the poor and oppressed!

It seems to me that it was fanaticism which nailed Jesus to the cross. In one form or another, it is still challenging those who follow him. It's time to step forward and face those who seek to destroy our values and proclaim: “*Je suis Charlie!*” “*I am Christ's man!*” “*I am Christ's woman!*” **Rev Ray Brown**

In a mother's womb were two babies. One asked the other: “Do you believe in life after delivery?” The other replied, “Why, of course. There has to be something after delivery. Maybe we are here to prepare ourselves for what we will be later.” “Nonsense” said the first. “There is no life after delivery. What kind of life would that be?”

The second said, “I don't know, but there will be more light than here. Maybe we will walk with our legs and eat from our mouths. Maybe we will have other senses that we can't understand now.”



The first replied, “That is absurd. Walking is impossible. And eating with our mouths? Ridiculous! The umbilical cord supplies nutrition and everything we need. But the umbilical cord is so short. Life after delivery is to be logically excluded.”

The second insisted, “Well I think there is something and maybe it’s different than it is here. Maybe we won’t need this physical cord anymore.”

The first replied, “Nonsense. And moreover if there is life, then why has no one has ever come back from there? Delivery is the end of life, and in the after-delivery there is nothing but darkness and silence and oblivion. It takes us nowhere.”

“Well, I don’t know,” said the second, “but certainly we will meet Mother and she will take care of us.”

The first replied “Mother? You actually believe in Mother? That’s laughable. If Mother exists then where is She now?”

The second said, “She is all around us. We are surrounded by her. We are of Her. It is in Her that we live. Without Her this world would not and could not exist.”

Said the first: “Well I don’t see Her, so it is only logical that She doesn’t exist.”

To which the second replied, “Sometimes, when you’re in silence and you focus and you really listen, you can perceive Her presence, and you can hear Her loving voice, calling down from above.” By Hungarian writer **Útmutató a Léleknek (submitted by Catharine Hughes PMC)**

News from around the circuit

During the Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity, Churches Together in Hazel Grove met for a united service, organised in turn by the various churches with some participation by members of the other churches.

This year the service on Sunday 18th January was held at Norbury Parish Church and led by Rev Rob Green. During the sermon, preached by Rev Richard Lawry, reference was made to the reading from John’s Gospel. “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water” (Chapter 10:4). Using, as an illustration, a newspaper cutting showing Indian boys each pouring a bucket of water over the boy in front of them whilst having water poured over them from behind.

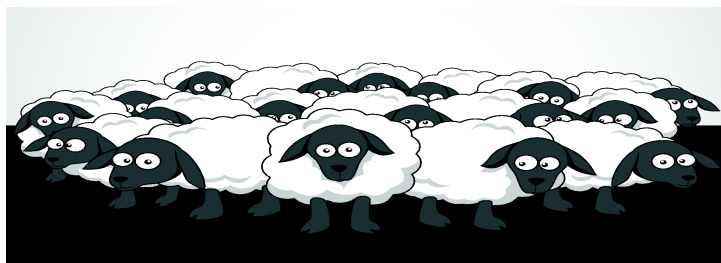


Week OF
Prayer
FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

Richard suggested that as we have that “Living Water” poured on us, we should pour it out on others.

Following a few minutes offering The Peace to one another, we sang the hymn (MP 554) which could be summarised “Peace, Love, Joy, Faith and Hope flowing like a river” perhaps reflecting the elements of that “Living Water”. Those of us attending were inspired and blessed by this act of worship **Pat Hunt HGMC**

Sheep in Shops



The centre of Poynton was cordoned off just before Christmas following reports that a flock of 20 sheep had escaped and was running amok amongst the local shops. As Police helicopters circled overhead, RSPCA representatives took up their position on the Magic Roundabouts, armed and ready should any ovine offences be committed.

Police were initially unable to track down the whereabouts of the 20 sheep as it was rumoured that they had abandoned their natural instincts to flock together and had in fact split up to hide in an assortment of locations. This may have been in part due to the fact that the sheep were finally identified as being made of wool, having been knitted as part of a Nativity Treasure Hunt organized by the congregation of Poynton Methodist church, under the guidance of their very own supposed 'Wiseman' who arrived in mysterious circumstances from the land of Swan Sea just over a year ago.

Local youngsters, along with their parents and grandparents, were encouraged to go and join in the search for these lost sheep, each one having been given its own unique name by the owners of the shops in which they had hidden. At the end of the treasure hunt which ran for seven days along Pak Lane and the civic centre car park, there was a prize of a family ticket to Stockley Farm for the individual who was able to record all 20 names and where they were found.

With parents finding Christmas more expensive every year, this provide a much needed 'sheep thrill' for their little lambs as well as engaging with the shops along Park Lane in a community event leading up to Christmas. Perhaps 'ewe' might be encouraged to have a go at doing something similar near your church next year? **Rev John PMC**

Hazel Grove Methodist Church Christmas Day Party

Christmas Day at Hazel Grove is always surprising because we never know exactly how many guests will be arriving for their Christmas Dinner and party. Much preparation goes into this day, starting early in December when invitations are distributed to would-be guests. Transport to and from the church is arranged and the shopping completed.

On Christmas Eve helpers gather around lunch time to peel the vegetables, lay the tables and arrange the welcoming room for the next day's tea and coffee when the guests arrive. On the morning of Christmas Eve the turkeys are cooked, trifles and mince-pies arrive from members of the congregation and whilst all this is going on in the kitchen one hundred and fifty Christingles are also being prepared for the afternoon's Christingle Service. We buy a present for each guest, supplemented by another gift from a family at the Baptist Church.

On Christmas Day the kitchen staff is ecumenical – Anglican, Methodist and Catholic – they arrive early and prepare the lunch, first preparing meals to be taken out to the housebound – this comprises a tray containing a full Christmas Dinner and pudding, a Christmas Cracker and a goodie bag containing a Satsuma, mince pies, Christmas cake, and chocolates together with a gift from Santa.

Following the Christmas morning service members descend to the kitchen and collect the "Take-out" meals and deliver them to the housebound, followed by the transporting of the guests to the party.

On arrival our guests are all greeted with a cup of tea or coffee after which they sit down, together with the helpers, to a full Christmas Lunch. When lunch is cleared everyone enjoys a program of entertainment followed by tea, Christmas cake and mince pies. Then the "man in red" - Father Christmas himself - arrives with gifts for everyone.

After a hearty lunch and enjoyable afternoon our guests are transported home each with a bulging goodie bag. This tradition of a party at Church on Christmas Day has been going on for thirty plus years - a very worthwhile way in which to spend Christmas Day and we feel that it is Gospel centered. Volunteers from the rest of the Circuit are always welcome.

Liz Turner HGMC.

News from Offerton Methodist Church



At Christmas we don't send cards to one another but just send one for the Church window sills together with a donation. This year the donations enable us to twin with two toilets one in India and one in Barundi.



Our Christmas gift day which was for Francis House Children's Hospice amounted to £96.

January saw our third annual holiday from 12th to 16th. Eighteen of us visited a very windy Llandudno with National Holidays where we stayed at the Grand Hotel. We toured Wales during the week and were reminded again of our wonderful landscape (and shopping outlets). An excellent holiday all for £99 per person.

On 20th January we had a celebration for the life of Jessie Hallworth who had spent all of her 100 years in Offerton. She was remembered for all her many roles in our Church and it was a tribute to her that the Church was packed. Many of the Youth Club were present, now no longer "Youth". A wonderful lady, much loved.

Hazel Grove Methodist Church Into the Community Sunday Lunch Project

You can be forgiven for thinking that the outreach at Hazel Grove seems to be mainly food centered – for yes, as well as the Christmas Day Party we also host Sunday Lunches around fourteen times a year.

Some forty plus years ago a group of folk from Hazel Grove were discussing, after dinner one evening, what they could do to “outreach” into the local community. The outcome of the discussion was that Sunday could be a very lonely day for those living alone, so why not host family Sunday Lunches and invite people from the local community to share in those lunches?

Food Glorious Food

As a result a few teams of families from the church got together and took it in turns to cook their Sunday lunch at church and invite people of any age, living alone, to share the meal with them. After about a year, families from other churches in Hazel Grove joined them and it became an ecumenical project with eleven ecumenical teams each hosting two lunches each year. The lunches were family occasions, because at that time most of our team members had young families, and the guests really enjoyed the family atmosphere, the chatting and eating together instead of preparing a meal and eating it alone.

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From about 1973 – we only have records from 1975, we began having an annual party for everyone on the guest register, the first two at Hazel Grove and from then on at St Peter's Social Club. For around thirty five years this was a "New Year Party" but more recently, because of some awful weather, it has become a summer party.

Sadly there are now only seven teams, although still with some of the original members, but the work goes on despite the fact that most of the team members are of a certain age. The project is still ecumenical and usually fourteen meals a year are hosted.

There is still a need, now perhaps more than ever, with families spread around the country and perhaps around the world and no longer able to invite mum or dad for Sunday lunch. A remark from one guest at a summer party makes it all worthwhile – "It doesn't matter what you have to eat, it's eating and chatting with other people that is so good."



Many people are tempted during Lent. Tempted to give something up. Tempted to stop doing something. Tempted to try and kick a bad habit. My challenge to you for this let it to complete 40 acts of random kindness. 40 spontaneous acts of generosity. 40 practical demonstrations to show that the world does not just revolves around you. Below I have suggested a simple list of things you might want to do. At any time. In any order. Just do one a day during Lent. Go on...I know you are tempted by the challenge.

1. Give up your seat
2. Hold a door open for someone
3. Give a (sincere) compliment
4. Make someone laugh
5. Give someone a hug
6. Take time to really listen to someone
7. Let one car in on every journey
8. Make someone new feel welcome
9. Help someone who's lost
10. Have a conversation with a stranger
11. Pick up litter as you walk
12. Let someone in front of you in the queue
13. Read a story with a child
14. Tell someone they mean a lot to you
15. Let someone have your parking spot
16. Offer your change to someone struggling to find the right amount
17. Treat a loved one to breakfast in bed
18. Buy cakes or fruit for your colleagues
19. Invite your neighbour round for a drink and a chat
20. Offer to help with someone's shopping
21. Tell someone if you notice they're doing a good job
22. Pass on a book you've enjoyed
23. Say sorry (you know who to)
24. Forgive someone for what they've done
25. Visit a sick friend, relative or neighbor
26. Buy an unexpected gift for someone
27. Bake something for a neighbor
28. Pay for someone in the queue behind
29. Do a chore that you don't normally do
30. Help out someone in need

31. Offer to look after a friend's children 32. Offer to mow your neighbour's lawn 33. Donate your old things to charity 34. Give food to a homeless person and take time to talk with them 35. Visit someone who may be lonely 36. Give blood 37. Get back in contact with someone you've lost touch with 38. Organise a fundraising event 39. Volunteer your time for a charity 40. Share the reason you're doing this i.e. your faith, with someone
Jenny Mossman PMC

Hazel Grove Methodist Church Sunday Club.

We have had a successful year so far and now have two age groups running on a Sunday morning in the Sunday club: one for children up to Year 2 and the other for children Year 2 and above. During the year, the children have enjoyed helping with acting out the stories at Messy Church and retelling the nativity story. They are looking forward to revisiting the Easter story and making Easter Gardens before joining with their families for the Easter Sunday service.

Family film nights have proved very popular, with just two remaining this year; 13th Feb and 20th March, doors open 5.10 for 5.30pm start. There is a Messy Church on Tuesday 17th February 10.00 -12.00 noon and another on Sunday 17th May at 3.00-5.00pm.

Our final event for the year will be a family picnic at Lyme Park on Sunday 28th June, meeting at church at 10.15 or at the upper car park at Lyme Park at 11.00 am.

Caroline Elder HGMC



'A heart strangely warmed' Aldersgate Day Wednesday, 24th May, 1738

On the above date John Wesley wrote in his journal: *"In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed.*

I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation: and an assurance was given me, that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."

I have often wondered why it was that someone reading *Martin Luther's preface to Romans* had such an impact on John Wesley, and not the epistle itself, which Wesley must have read and heard hundreds of times. Romans is an inspiring and challenging epistle although not always an easy book to understand. I think that Luther was able to interpret Romans for Wesley in a way that he had not been able to understand before.

Connexion

Martin Luther wrote: *"Faith is a living, unshakable confidence in God's grace; it is so certain, that someone would die a thousand times for it. This kind of trust in and knowledge of God's grace makes a person joyful, confident, and happy with regard to God and all creatures. This is what the Holy Spirit does by faith. Through faith, a person will do good to everyone without coercion, willingly and happily; he will serve everyone, suffer everything for the love and praise of God, who has shown him such grace. It is as impossible to separate works from faith as burning and shining from fire."*

John Wesley, an academic and theologian, had perhaps been concentrating so hard on good works, like prison and sick visiting, that he had forgotten that God's love is not dependent on what we do, but on our faith and relationship with him.

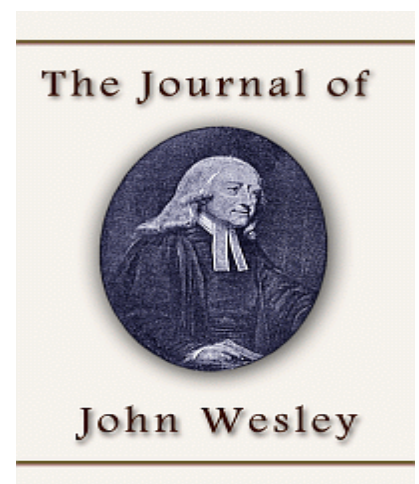
At the time of Wesley's 'conversion experience' he had been an Anglican priest for ten years. He and his brother Charles had travelled to America in 1735 in order, Wesley writes, *'to save our souls; to live wholly, to the glory of God.'* They were to minister to native Americans and the British immigrants in Savannah, Georgia.

On the long sea voyage to America they met a group of German Moravians and John began to learn German in order to converse with them. He became very impressed with their total faith in God, especially when the ship was caught in a terrible storm and the Moravians were the only people who didn't panic, but instead ministered to the other passengers. He commented on the humility of the Moravians who, *'performed those servile offices for the other passengers, which none of the English would undertake, and 'when the storm was at its highest the Germans calmly sang on.'*

Two years later when John and Charles Wesley returned from their disappointingly unsuccessful sojourn in America (another story!) they both encountered a visiting German Moravian priest and missionary. Peter Bohler arrived in England in February 1738 and John, meeting him and his two friends, offered to find lodgings for them. From then on the two brothers never lost an opportunity to talk about their faith with Peter Bohler. John, still smarting from his abortive trip to Georgia continued to feel very unworthy of the God he sought to serve and asked himself whether he should, *'Leave off preaching. How can you preach to others, who have not faith yourself?'*

He asked Peter Bohler whether he should stop preaching, but Bohler's reply was, *'Preach faith till you have it; and then because you have it, you will preach faith.'* Wesley could not feel a sense of God's forgiveness.

He talked about the scriptures with Peter Bohler on many occasions, but felt that he had not experienced the truth of them for himself.



Connexion

About two months after meeting Bohler and after a busy week of preaching in London, Wesley found himself going 'very unwillingly to Aldersgate Street,' where a Moravian society was meeting in a room. Here it was that, on this unexpected and inauspicious occasion, John Wesley received his 'heart warming experience,' when at long last he felt that he trusted in God alone and, this experience, in a sense, became the foundation of Methodism.

It can perhaps be a consolation to us that even after this experience John Wesley wrote in his journal that he was unable to feel the warmth and conviction which he had felt then all the time, but that it came and went. The important thing is that we believe that God is there for us all the time even if we cannot feel his presence.

Elsewhere in his journal Wesley writes of the importance of prayer in his life. Having had the privilege of working at Wesley's Chapel, and living on the third floor in Wesley's House in the City Road in London for three years, I know well the tiny prayer room leading out of Wesley's bedroom. This room on the first floor where Wesley used to pray for an hour at 4 am each morning has become known as 'the power house of Methodism.' Visitors from many parts of the world confess to being strangely moved as they stand in this tiny sanctuary.

For the last 12 years of his life, whenever he was in London, Wesley lived in the house on City Road. He died in the bedroom which leads into his prayer room, and the last words attributed to him, encompassed in Andrew Pratt's lovely hymn, sum up Wesley's experience which I believe can also be ours, based on words attributed to John Wesley on his death bed * **Maureen Jackson (WMC)**

Best of all is God is with us, *
God will hold and never fail.
Keep that truth when storms are raging,
God remains though faith is frail.

Best of all is God is with us,
Life goes on and needs are met.
God is strongest in our weakness,
Love renews, will not forget.

Best of all is God is with us,
Hearts are challenged, strangely warmed.
Faith is deepened, courage strengthened,
Grace received and hope reformed.

@Andrew Pratt 28.06.2003 Singing the Faith

What's happening around the circuit during Lent?

This year the **Worship Group at Hazel Grove** has again arranged a short liturgy with which to begin our Sunday morning services during Lent and on Good Friday. This is to be very simple and will not involve any spoken words. Instead a Lenten symbol will be brought forward by a member of the congregation, followed by the singing of one of the new hymns in *Singing the Faith*.

The hymn we are using is no. 288 'When I think about the cross' by Mark Johnson and Helen Johnson. It is only short and the tune, whilst probably not generally known, can be picked up quite easily.

The symbols we shall use this year will be the cross and a purple robe (week one), a bag of coins (week two), a globe (week four), a crown of thorns (week five) and a hammer and nails (to be hammered in) on Good Friday. Week six (Palm Sunday) will, as usual, be different as all the congregation will have the opportunity to bring forward a palm cross, when some red cloth will also be used to represent the cloaks which were thrown on the ground. For those eagle-eyed among you ... no, we haven't forgotten week three. On that day we shall be attending worship at the United Reformed Church in Hazel Grove, part of our regular arrangement to attend each other's worship, 'home' or 'away', once a quarter.

On Easter Sunday when the Cross of Passion has been transformed into a Tree of Life (symbolised by its adorning with spring flowers) we have decided, for the first time, not to leave this inside but to place it outside the front door of the church as a witness to those who pass by. **Adrian Law (HGMC)**



Churches Together in Hazel Grove have organised a series of meetings entitled 'A Lenten journey through Mark's Gospel'. Dates and Locations are as follows with all meetings starting at 7.30pm

Wednesday March 25th at the Baptist Church

Wednesday April 4th at the URC

Wednesday April 11th at St. Peters Church

Wednesday April 18th at Methodist Church

Wednesday April 25th at Norbury Parish Church

Hazel Grove Methodist Church will be offering bible study courses both on an afternoon and also evening during Lent. Beginning on Wednesday Feb 25th @ 2.00pm, then on Wednesday 4th 11th, 18th, 25 of March. Theme: Journey on to Easter

Windlehurst Methodist Church is having an evening series of meetings on a Tuesday evening at 7.30pm. The title of this course is 'Christ and the Chocolaterie' by Hilary Brand which is inspired by the film 'Chocolat'. The weekly titles are:

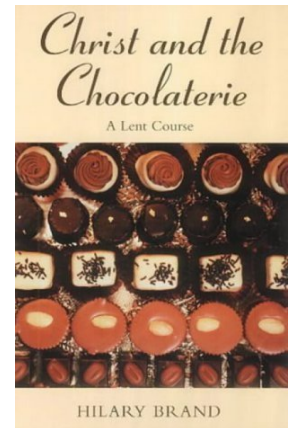
Tuesday 24th February **Giving up - the prelude to change**

Tuesday 3rd March **Giving out - the power of a gift**

Tuesday 10th March **Getting wise - the possibility of change**

Tuesday 17th March **Getting real - the power of acceptance**

Tuesday 24th March **Growing up - the process of change**



Poynton Methodist Church will be hosting a Lent bible study based on the BBC's 4 part TV production 'The Passion' starring James Nesbitt. In order to take part in this study you will need access to a copy of the DVD (available for £8 from places such as Amazon)

The study will run for 4 weeks and take place on the following dates

Mon March 2nd (7.30pm) repeated on Wed March 4th (10.30am)

Mon March 9th (7.30pm) repeated on Wed March 11th (10.30am)

Mon March 23rd (7.30pm) repeated on Wed March 18th (10.30am) Final session will bring both groups together and will take place on Saturday 28th March (7.30pm)

Dialstone Lane Methodist Church will be hosting a series of studies during Lent. These will run on a Tuesday and

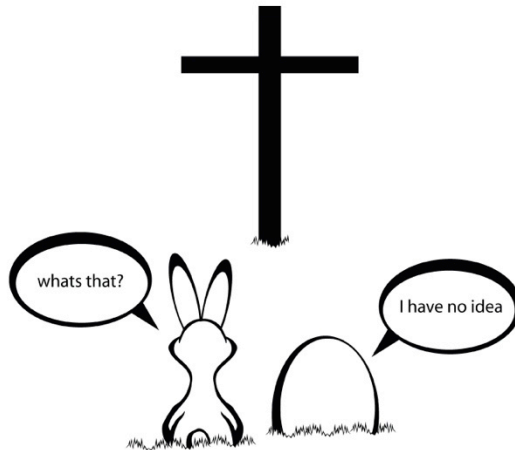
will offer both afternoon and evening sessions. The afternoon group will meet @2pm at 114 Mile End Lane on Tuesday February 24th and March 3rd, 10th & 17th

The evening group will meet @7.30pm at 41 Canada Street on Tuesdays March 3rd, 10th, 17th & 24th

- Week 1 **Journeying with the disciples: Confusion**
- Week 2 **Journeying with the disciples: Anger**
- Week 3 **Journeying with the disciples: Numbness**
- Week 4 **Journeying with the disciples: Peace**



Hopefully you will not only find one of more of these courses appealing but will be able to find the time to join together with others in exploring and deepening your faith. After all someone need to be able to tell the secular world the true meaning of Easter.



N	E	W	C	O	M	M	A	N	D	M	E	N	T	I	C	Y	A
H	R	K	R	A	V	T	B	Z	P	N	A	G	J	P	A	L	M
E	M	J	U	D	A	S	H	B	X	P	S	O	M	H	F	K	A
D	V	H	C	A	X	I	P	I	L	A	T	E	B	H	G	L	R
I	N	R	I	B	L	M	J	C	E	Y	E	H	P	E	D	N	Y
L	B	E	F	J	W	O	R	T	N	Q	R	S	K	R	Y	O	M
A	V	N	I	P	P	N	K	H	T	G	O	L	G	O	T	H	A
S	C	A	X	T	A	S	H	W	E	D	N	E	S	D	A	Y	G
T	U	M	I	W	S	O	P	Q	V	H	D	J	P	T	G	L	D
S	W	E	O	T	S	L	X	B	J	L	P	Z	B	M	F	I	A
U	J	S	N	N	O	I	T	C	E	R	R	U	S	E	R	P	L
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For those of you who fancy a bit of theological fun, why not have a go at finding these words or phrases, all of them associated with Lent & Easter



Ash Wednesday—The first day of Lent.

Crown of thorns—Because Jesus said he was King of the Jews the soldiers put a crown of thorns on His head to mock Him.

Crucifixion—the Roman way of executing people. From two Latin words: Cruci (cross) and ficere (to fix), fixing someone to a cross.

Easter—The time when Christians celebrate Jesus rising from the dead. The date varies from year to year but is always in spring, the time of new life in the natural world.

Gethsemane—The garden where Jesus prayed the night before his crucifixion.

Golgotha—The place where the crucifixion took place. It means Place of the Skull.

Good Friday—The day Jesus died. It's called "good" because Jesus loved everyone so much that he was prepared to die to take the punishment for our sins (the things we do wrong).

Herod—One of the Roman rulers involved in the trial of Jesus.

INRI—The label on the top of the crucifix. It means "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews" (in Latin I is used instead of J, and the Latin word for "king" is "Rex").

Judas—Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus' disciples (followers) betrayed Jesus to the priests from the temple.

Last Supper—The meal Jesus shared with his disciples the night before he died. He blessed and shared bread (His "body") and wine (His "blood") and asked his disciples to continue to do this in memory of Him.

Lent—The forty days (not counting Sundays) before Easter.

Mary Magdalene—A friend of Jesus, she was the first to know about Jesus' resurrection.

New Commandment—The new commandment Jesus gave at the Last Supper was "Love one another as I have loved you". The word Maundy means command.

Palm—When Jesus entered Jerusalem one week before his death he was greeted as a hero, with people calling "Hosanna" and laying palms before Him in His honour.

Passover—The Jewish Feast celebrating God "passing over" the children of the Israelites in the tenth plague on Egypt (see Exodus, chapters 11 and 12).

Pilate—The Roman Prefect of Judea who ordered Jesus' crucifixion.

Resurrection—Jesus rose from the dead three days after the crucifixion.

Sanhedrin—The Jewish Court which tried Jesus before handing him over to Pilate.

Simon—Simon of Cyrene helped Jesus carry his cross when it became too heavy for Him

Wood Lanes...going, going, gone!

As I hope you are already aware Wood Lanes Church has closed and we expect it will soon be sold for redevelopment. The contents of the building have largely been disposed of but there are still a large number of almost new kitchen cupboards with modern T bar handles plus some good quality parquet flooring ideal for the home/ office. All proceeds going to Circuit funds. Please contact Chris Cotton on telephone number 01625 872592 asap to prevent disappointment.

Connexion

GOOD GRIEF - BALD STATEMENTS A Study in Grief and Personal Loss and a Journey of Hope An exhibition by Jean Parker



Sculptures that present a powerful and unique visual exploration of the grief process.

An exhibition that stimulates reflection and discussion about the powerful and sometimes overwhelming emotions that accompany personal loss. Images that help us understand the transitional stages experienced by many as part of a natural process ... offering glimpses of hope when all seems lost.

Dialstone Lane Methodist Church Feb 18th – March 16th 2015

Wednesdays @ 10a.m. – 2p.m. *February 18th & 25th, March 4th & 11th*
Saturdays @ 10a.m. – 4 p.m. *February 21st & 28th, March 7th*

Other times by arrangement: 0161 285 1431



On Sunday 17th May at Poynton Methodist Church, Reverend Paul Wilson will be leading an afternoon workshop on 'Prayer' for the whole circuit.

This is open and appropriate for anyone who prays, either individually, as part of a group or whilst leading worship.

If you believe prayer to be an important part of your faith journey, please come along.

Further details will appear in individual church notices nearer the time. Please make a note in your diary and come along to discover how to develop and deepen our prayer life.



How to find and contact us

- Offerton Methodist Church, Marple Road Offerton, Stockport SK2 5EP

Reverend Amanda Boon (0161 285 1431) www.offertonmethodist.co.uk

- Dialstone Lane Methodist Church, 161 Dialstone Lane, Offerton, Stockport, SK2 7LQ

Reverend Amanda Boon (0161 285 1431) www.dialstonelanemethodistchurch.co.uk

- Hazel Grove Methodist church, Wesley Street, Hazel Grove, Stockport, Cheshire, SK7 4JQ

Reverend John Payne (0161 483 0150) www.wesleystreet.org

- Windlehurst Methodist church, Windlehurst Lane, High Lane, Stockport, SK6 8AF

Reverend John Payne (0161 483 4952) www.windlehurstmethodistchurch.co.uk

- Poynton Methodist Church, Civic Car Park, Park Lane, Poynton, Stockport, Cheshire SK12 1RB

Reverend John Wiseman (01625 871592 or 01625 261769) www.poyntonmethodist.org

- Green Close Methodist Church, Shrigley Road, Pott Shrigley, Macclesfield , SK10 5RU

Reverend John Wiseman (01625 871592 or 01625 261769) www.greenclosemc.blogspot.co.uk

The next edition of the circuit magazine will cover the months of June – August 2015

Please ensure that any articles are submitted directly to Reverend John Wiseman either by e mail (jwiserev@hotmail.co.uk) or via post c/o Poynton Methodist Church by **April 30th 2015.**

The **Methodist** Church 