

Connections



Ashbourne
Methodist Circuit

September 2025

Dear friends,

Are you getting excited? Are you finding you cannot sleep because of all the anticipation? Do you feel as if all your best birthdays are about to come at once?



Perhaps you now think that either your minister has well and truly lost the plot or that you don't know what you should be looking forward to. It is possible that the first statement is true but let me put you out of your misery, if you are still wondering what is about to happen. This month's magazine will be available from 17th August and at that point it will be only 14 days until Ashbourne Methodist Circuit and all its churches becomes the Ashbourne Methodist One Church Circuit.

I recognise this is probably not as exciting as a special birthday, or the start of a new millennium but this is a significant moment for our circuit. We are coming together from across the circuit to form one church council that offers worship in eight different churches. We are uniting to take some of the strain, of what is sometimes seen as excessive bureaucracy away so that we can all focus on the main thing – mission.

What is exciting is that we are joining a small group of pioneers in having one church circuits. We are leading the way of being church and circuit in a different form. This small group is so far ahead of the curve that even the Standing Orders of The Methodist Church are struggling to keep up with us and we have some freedom to find our way and report back the joys and the challenges.

We go into the future 'by faith'. For it is 'by faith' that we find ourselves in this place. By the faith of our ancestors in this area who built the churches, reached out with the good news to our communities and who left us a legacy to build on. It is 'by faith' that we can now build a future legacy for future

generations across our circuit area. Our names may not get listed like those in the great hall of faith we find in Hebrews 11 but nonetheless we do continue their legacy 'by faith' now and for the future.

Please do hold our church and circuit officers in your prayers as we step into this new way of being and by faith may God continue to bless all we have contact with.

Blessings

Nicola

"I do not think either
the Church of England
or the people called
Methodists, or any other
particular society under
heaven to be 'the true
Church of Christ'; for
that church is but one,
and contains all the true
believers on earth... I
conceive every society
of true believers to be a
branch of the one, true
Church of God."

JOHN WESLEY

- 1750 -



#WesleyWednesday

Circuit Family News September 2025

Greetings to all around the Ashbourne One Church Circuit. This month we continue to pray for all those who are unwell, recovering from surgery, awaiting treatment and test results, or facing difficult times.

We offer our condolences to John Dy on the loss of his dear sister in law and pray for all bereaved families.

September is the time to remember all those returning to school, college and university. We hope that you feel refreshed after your Summer break. For those who sat exams this year, we hope all your hard work paid off and results day was a successful one.

We are always pleased to report your good news, so let us know if you are happy to share. On 12 September Hazel U will be celebrating her 90th birthday. Then on 25 September Judith S will be celebrating her 70th birthday. Happy birthday to you both.

Finally, our thanks go to Carole T after her many years working as the Circuit Administrator. Enjoy your retirement, Carole!

Wendy Haslam (Pastoral Secretary) 2.8.25

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed. For his compassions never fail. They are new every morning. Great is your faithfulness. Lamentations 3:22-23

Anne's Charity Pizza Night

On Friday 19 September Cornerstone and Delicious Co are organising a charity pizza night to raise money for the Glitz and Glamour charity. This evening has been inspired by Anne Wareing and she will be sharing some of her cancer story during the evening.



Tickets are £40 and if you wish to see the menu it is available in the Cornerstone Coffee House. Tables are selling fast and to book your table please call in to Cornerstone or email Beth at info@bethskitchen.co.uk.

We look forward to seeing you on September 19th.

A 60th Wedding Anniversary

Thank you to everyone who sent cards and messages to Mum & Dad – Chris & John on the occasion of their 60th Wedding Anniversary.

We celebrated with an afternoon tea for 100+ family and friends from near and far. It was so lovely to have everyone together in celebration.

We are very blessed.

Jane, Rachel, Alec
and all the family



Bible Society – Ukraine – prayers for September

Pray that the bombing of Civilians will cease and the fighting will stop.

Thank the Lord that so many Ukrainians have come to know the hope and peace found only in Jesus during this terrible conflict. Pray that more will find the truth, helped by the Scriptures they have been given, and through the trauma healing groups they attend.

Ask God to bless the trauma healing programme and ask him to give strength, courage and wisdom to the facilitators.

Introducing the President and Vice President of the Methodist Church 2025-26

The Revd Richard Andrew is currently chair of the Darlington District. Growing up in rural North Yorkshire, he studied philosophy and theology in London before moving into the South-East and Yorkshire industry.



He trained at Wesley House, Cambridge before joining a circuit in Sheffield, training ministers and teaching theology in a university setting as Director of York Institute and working in the Connexional Team as Director of Learning and Development.

He has a deep passion for the renewal and refreshing of the Methodist Church and the rediscovery of its DNA as a growing, inclusive, evangelistic and justice-seeking church. He is married to Debbie a former teacher and now a Church and Community Worker in Teesdale with two grown up children, Tom and Becky.

He enjoys walking, reading, hospitality, guitar and watching Middlesbrough FC.

The Revd Richard Andrew says, "I am humbled and excited by the nomination of the Conference. I have always believed that it is essential that we live by hope and I am really encouraged by everything we are doing together as a Church as we join together with God as we seek to be a growing, inclusive, evangelistic and justice-seeking Church.

"God is bringing something new to birth amongst us and I pray we might be open to the leading of the Spirit as we recognise that and follow in the footsteps of Jesus."

Matthew Forsyth is a local preacher and steward. He is the Mission Team Leader in the Northampton Methodist District. Within this role, Matt leads a diverse team of lay and ordained leaders.



As Mission team Leader, Matt works to see a flourishing sustainable network of circuits of worshipping communities that are growing, evangelistic, justice-seeking, and inclusive in their outworking of the mission of God. That means areas like New Place for New People (NPNP), Justice, Dignity and Solidarity (JDS), and the lay leadership development form key parts of his role. Matt is a member of the Missions Committee and currently serves on the NPNP guiding team.

Having studied Theology, worked as an estate agent, and spent time working as a fundraiser for All We Can to name a few roles, Matt remains firm in his calling to lay leadership. As such, Matt serves as a trustee of a Christian Schools Charity in his home city, Peterborough (CROPS), and offers as a mentor to teenagers in his spare time.

With his wife Amy, his three kids, and bouncy cockapoo, any time that is offered is given to their care and attention. Matt has a deep desire to listen, encourage, and play his part in the flourishing of a church on the journey of being inclusive, just seeking, and evangelistic.

Matt Forsyth says, "I am humbled to serve the church in this role. I am deeply aware of the responsibility to represent the voice of the lay leaders across the Connexion.

"I hope to listen well and work in partnership with the President Designate so that together we can encourage the church to continue its journey on becoming an inclusive, justice seeking and evangelistic church."

**From the Revd Richard Andrew and Matthew Forsyth,
President and Vice-President of the Conference.**

We have been appalled and horrified by the pictures and first-hand witness accounts of the dire situation in Gaza, particularly around access to food for those existing there. No-one could fail to be moved by the images of emaciated children and we have a moral duty to heed and act on the warnings from countless aid agencies of mass starvation and malnutrition.

We welcome the pause in military activity, but this is not enough. Red lines in international law have been crossed by the Israeli Government and they and Hamas must provide explicit acceptance of the right to peace, security and prosperity for all Israelis and Palestinians.

The Methodist Conference this year accepted a memorial (motion) from the Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury District Synod asking the Conference to write to the UK government urging it to recognise the independent state of Palestine, a position the Methodist Church has long held.

The motion stated that over the last twelve months, “the Israeli government has accelerated the seizure and annexation of Palestinian land, in violation of international law. This has implications not only for Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza who are forcibly displaced but also for any prospect of a future peace.”

The time is now right for the Government to take decisive action to recognise the state of Palestine, its right to self-determination, and to ensure safety for all its citizens across the West Bank and we urge them to do this without delay. We ask the Methodist people to continue to pray for those caught up in the violence in Gaza who don't know where their next meal is coming from. We also continue to pray for those in the West Bank who are living in constant fear of indiscriminate border closures and settler violence against them.

Prayer

Creator God, you breathed life into this world and us all.
We long for an end to suffering in Gaza and pray for freedom for all your creation.
Give to those in authority wisdom to act decisively for the good of all, so that we may see a just and peaceful resolution in Gaza, the West Bank and Israel.
In the name of the Prince of Peace,
Amen.

Keeping Faith

Violence against Christians is on the rise in Africa and Asia

Even in the age of waning religious observance, the western world still owes much of its cultural inheritance to Christianity. In countries such as Britain, where church is still the central landmark in village and town, and the clergy remain active, if largely ignored, participants in the national conversation, it can be difficult to conceive of Christians paying the ultimate price for their faith. This, however, is the deadly reality for believers across the world; one too often overlooked by those lucky enough to live in societies in which religious tolerance is taken for granted.

This week, more than 40 churchgoers were killed by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), an affiliate of the murderous death cult Islamic State, as they maintained a nocturnal vigil at a church in Komanda, a rural town in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Nine of the dead were children; the Catholic community's shops were burnt and looted. Christian worshippers in remote areas, where state security is non-existent, are easy prey for Islamists. In February the ADF beheaded 70 Christians in a Church in the neighboring province of North Kivu.

These acts of religious hatred are increasingly common in sub-Saharan Africa, where Islamist groups are perpetrating heinous crimes with seeming impunity. Last month, Nigeria's Fulani jihadists – acting like their Congolese counterparts under the cover of darkness - set upon a Catholic mission in the village of Yelwata. Armed with rifles and machetes, they killed about 200 people and forced thousands more to flee their homes 'Most of them' said Terhemba Lormba, a farmer who lost three of his children in the massacre, 'were burnt alive'. As the Pope noted in the hours following the attack, to be Christian in a volatile and contested land means being 'targeted relentlessly' by sectarian violence.

Such is life for embattled Christians in the nations where their faith is not the default or established religion. In Pakistan, Christians who resist conversion to Islam are regularly beaten and killed, and women and girls raped and forced into marriage. One Christian, Wagas Masih, 22, who worked at a paper mill in the Punjab, ended up in hospital after refusing his employer's attempts to convert him to Islam.

Even Counties that have been historically tolerant of Christians are now witnessing a grim uptick in violence. In Syria last month, Islamic State was blamed for a suicide bomb and gun attack on a Greek Orthodox church in the suburbs of Damascus during Sunday evening service in which 25 people were killed and 63 wounded. It was the first the city's Christian community had been targeted openly since conflict with the Druze in 1860.

Even as Church attendances creep up across Europe and North America, the plight of Christians is neither a fashionable or popular cause for the socially conscious. But westerners owe their solidarity – and western governments their diplomatic might – to these embattled minorities. Church leaders in Britain and abroad must take up the cause, ensuring that these atrocities are not relegated to footnotes in the news agenda.

Justin Welby's tenure as Archbishop of Canterbury was a failure in some respects, but his tireless and often thankless work raising awareness of the suffering of his fellow Christians' around the world is worthy of great respect. His successor and other Christian leaders must continue his work, shining a light in Dark places.

From The Times 31st July 2025

ONLINE SHORT COURSE

John Wesley and the Church Fathers: Ancient Wisdom for Today's Ministry



Organised by the Centre for Global Wesleyan Theology,
Wesley House, Cambridge

This course, led by the Rev'd Canon Dr Jason Radcliff,
offers participants the chance to become more familiar
with the sources of John Wesley's Theology and
Ministry and appreciation of other Christian traditions.

**Tuesdays 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th October 2025
between 7pm and 9pm (UK Time)**

Early bird offer: £100 until 15th August (then £120)



Wesley House
Cambridge

For information email office@wesley.cam.ac.uk
www.wesley.cam.ac.uk

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This online short course encourages a deeper understanding of the Wesleyan tradition's rootedness in early Christianity. Participants will learn about how the Methodist movement, which Wesley founded as a prophetic revival within the "one, holy, catholic and apostolic church", was shaped by these sources. It is ideal for laypeople, scholars, theologians, clergy, students, and anyone passionate about exploring the sources of John Wesley's theology and ministry.

Through a close study of both Wesley and the Fathers, this course will help students to further understand the Methodist Church and Wesleyanism as rooted in the church fathers and, as such, will help students to read the Fathers and Wesley in this context.

The course is led by the Rev'd Canon Dr Jason Radcliff, who has published widely on the Church Fathers, Orthodoxy and the Oxford Movement.

Early bird offer: £100 until 15th August (then £120)

For more information contact Daniel Pratt Morris-Chapman via office@wesley.cam.ac.uk



**The Rev'd Canon
Dr Jason Radcliff**



**Wesley House
Cambridge**

For information email office@wesley.cam.ac.uk
www.wesley.cam.ac.uk



Milldale

I think it would be true to say that attendances at the Summer services in 2025 has been disappointingly low, even the 190th anniversary service was not overwhelmingly attended.

Are we planning these services on the wrong night of the week – currently Wednesday, or the wrong part of the month – currently early in the month, or do we need a new format. I should be pleased to receive comments and suggestions

Cliff Lewer

Beyond the Blue

Nina Blaszczyk & Phil Baggaley

recently returned from the Edinburgh Fringe

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
Methodist Church Brailsford
present

ISLAND SPIRIT

Songs by Nina Blaszczyk & Phil Baggaley
Story by Tim Harvey

Saturday
27th September 2025
at
Brailsford Chapel
Methodist Church,
Main Road, DE6 3DA
Commencing at
7.00pm (50-minute
performance)

Refreshments available
from 6.30pm and after
the performance



Ticket price - £10.00

Tickets available from -

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/booking/t-lnyevezn>
Rosemary and Jonathan Webb – 01335 360308
or Jane Baker – 07712 937168



"REFLECTIONS ON REMEMBRANCE"! (Part Three)

More memories of "H" as after my mother, during one of our weekly phone calls, said she was going out for the day in a week or two with "H" and his fellow veterans to the National Arboretum at Alrewas, and then calling in at Ashbourne for their meal at "The Bentley Brook Inn", and could I meet her there? I agreed to, and she told me what time they would be there, and, that I would meet her.

At the appointed time I went up, parked my car, and got a drink from the bar and wandered into the dining room.

Seeing where my mother was I walked up, to tell her I had arrived, and was about to put my hand on her shoulder, when half a dozen of the veterans, jumped up to stop me!

Mum looked round, and said, "At ease soldiers, he's my son"! At which they all welcomed me and shook hands, explaining they were very protective of Mum, as she had done so much good in their lives.

Later, I talked to Mum, and she told me how lovely they all were to her, and she always finished the sentence by saying "They treated me like a lady"!

When visiting Mum, I also, when I could went into the old folks complex and talked to "H".

A few years later, Mum was in hospital, "H" for all his aches and pains, (for I never saw him without crutches) got his daughter to bring him to the hospital.

His first comment to her was, "You left your tea behind when you came here. Do you want me to keep it warm for you"?

Mum could not stop laughing at him and threatened to hit him if she could get out of bed.

Within moments they were hugging and both laughing together. A few weeks later, Mum passed away, and "H" was told by the staff. When I went to see him a little later, he cried when he saw me, as he had grown to love Mum for all the visits she had made and all that she had done for him!

Jump forward a few years to the here and now, as on Wednesday 4th June, I, at last managed to drive to Stockport, as I had not been for ages due to one thing and another, but too long to mention in detail here.

I went to tend Mum's and my families grave in Cheadle Heath, where mother, my brother and my Granddad and Nana are laid to rest. I know as a Christian, they are not there, but it is a promise I made to my mother before she died, and I have kept it.

While there I decided to go and see, although I very much doubted it, if "H" was still alive, in the Old Folk's residence that was attached to where Mum lived. It took a bit of doing, not only seeing Mum's house and bringing a whole plethora of memories, but the one way system around the area, was something to behold too. But, I got there eventually, rang the bell, and enquired if "H" was still with us? The matron let me in and said, with sadness , that "H" had passed away five years ago. I was so upset to hear that news.

Hence, with the memories I have had, even though I have never experienced war as "H" did, I have always given thanks on the 11th November, and to people like "H" whenever I have had the chance to thank them for what they did to defend the lives we lead today.

"Thank you," for all its good intentions seems woefully inadequate for what people like "H" and his "Band of Brothers did for us, for I would not like to contemplate what our land and lives would be like if it wasn't what we have today.

Tom Parkinson

A Thought

Rest is not idleness, and to lie sometimes on the grass under trees on a summer's day, listening to the murmur of the water, or watching the clouds float across the sky, is by no means a waste of time.

John Lebbcock

BIBLE

A little boy opened the big family Bible. He was fascinated as he fingered through the old pages. Suddenly, something fell out of the Bible. He picked up the object and looked at it. What he saw was an old leaf that had been pressed in between the pages.

'Mama, look what I found,' the boy called out.

'What have you got there, dear?'

With astonishment in the young boy's voice, he answered, 'I think it's Adam's underwear!'

Ode to the Yorkshireman's Wallet

O the Yorkshireman's wallet is a wondrous thing
With coins of many denominations it does ring
Pennies and florins of that I have no doubt
But you will never know how many because he won't ever
open it to get the beggers out!!

The Cornerstone

Now re located into what will be Trinity Hall, the café gives everyone the opportunity to foresee just what a splendid venue has been created and what a stunning colour scheme has been chosen. Access for all is available via the new ramp to the left of the steps entrance, and the welcome is just wonderful

Please encourage all of your friends and contacts to pop in for a drink or a meal, they will be well suited with the variety of food and the care to cater for special diets.

REFLECTIONS

Last night, watching the news, I learned of the passing of a hero of mine Jim Lovell, the astronaut who went around the Moon at Christmas time in 1968 in Apollo 8, and was part of the crew of Apollo 13, that, due to a fault in the spacecraft, which blew the Oxygen tank, just made it back to earth.

I have been lucky enough to meet two of those astronauts, Frank Borman, who was on the Apollo 8 mission with Jim Lovell, and Bill Anders, plus, Edwin Aldrin, the second man on the Moon. It always amazed me how, shall I say, these men, who had been to the Moon, were so down to Earth when meeting them.

Others have told me the same, when meeting other astronauts. One named John Young, when asked, what thoughts he had when atop a rocket and spacecraft weighing 3,700 tons, which, could, in theory, if it did not launch, but blew up on the pad, would have produced a blast 17 times greater than the Nuclear Device that was detonated over Hiroshima.

(Another event in our thoughts as we look toward the Anniversary of V. J. Day this month!)

John Young said, "Here I am on top of 3,700 tons of American Spacecraft Engineering, all tendered by the lowest bidder"!

Thinking on these two things, The Apollo Moon programme, and the end of World War 2, the latter with weapons of unimaginable destruction, I noted on the news programmes on the Apollo missions, of that beautiful sight not seen by mankind till 1968 of the Earth rising above the Moon, and how small and fragile it looked in the vastness of Space, and how one astronaut said, by putting his thumb over that image, showed how small our world was, how fragile it was, and how we really needed to care for it.

God Bless, **Tom. P**

A huge stack of toilet rolls fell on me in the supermarket. I'm ok though, just soft tissue damage.

60 years ago, kids learned

A is for **APPLE**
B is for **BALL**
C is for **CAT**
D is for **DOG**

Today...

A is for **ANDROID**
B is for **BLUETOOTH**
C is for **CHAT**
D is for **DOWNLOAD**

And to Senior citizens

A is for **ARTHRITIS**
B is for **BLOOD PRESSURE**
C is for **CHOLESTEROL**
D is for **DIABETES**



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What's in it for me?

I have recently returned from a 'long-ish' holiday and when I landed back at home and contacted a few friends I asked "what's been going on here in Ashbourne?" What I suppose I REALLY meant was "what's the gossip?" Gossip is rarely a positive thing sharing 'upbeat' happy information, no it is feeding upon the unfortunate happenings of others and enjoying the risqué knowledge that we can then gleefully share with other people, after all knowledge is power....!

Gossip doesn't have to be just sharing information about other people, it can be repeating an unfortunate experience we have had with another individual for the enjoyment and entertainment of others at the expense of the person we are gossiping about.

On a recent train journey I found myself in a reserved seat next to a particular bedraggled looking (and smelly) individual. Apart from the initial annoyance I felt, I then began to think about how I would amuse my friends with the story of how I had ended up seated next to this person for my journey onwards and how the smell was almost intolerable; oh what a laugh we would have! And then I stopped myself, this young man was obviously exhausted as he was deeply asleep, he had a college bag on his knee, was dirty, unwashed and looked very uncared for. I began to speculate about why he was in this state, had he worked a night shift and was then grabbing what sleep he could before his day in college? Why were his clothes unwashed, what was his sleeping accommodation and home life like? Why couldn't he wash himself and clean his hair and fingernails? And as I thought about him, I began to pray for him, and something changed, I could no longer smell his body odour. For the remainder of the journey I prayed for this young man and asked for him to be given rest and the love and care he so obviously needed.

Proverbs 16:28 A perverse person sows strife, and a whisperer separates the best of friends.

Rachel Murt

Dates for the Diary – Services

Sunday 17th August

Ashbourne	10.30	Diana Whitmill and Stuart Green Catherine Green and Anne Payne
	18.30	Robert Sales PRAISE
Brailsford	10.30	Revd John Hellyer Holy Communion
Tissington	10.30	Revd Nicola Briggs Holy Communion Church Anniversary

Sunday 24th August

Ashbourne	10.30	Revd Nicola Briggs and Gareth Rutledge
Brailsford	15.00 at	All Saints
Kniveton	11.00	Revd Andy Fyall
Kirk Ireton	18.30	Cathy Stubbs

Sunday 31st August

Circuit	10.45	Circuit Service with Brailsford Benefice at the Brailsford Institute Led by Revd David Leese and David Adams
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Sunday 7th September

Missions Sunday

Ashbourne	10.30	Revd Nicola Briggs, Jeff Foules and Zethu (Phakamisa) Lorraine Hawkins and Anne Payne
	16.30	Tim Dutton Afternoon Tea
Brailsford	10.30	Revd David Leese All Age Holy Communion
Parwich	14.30	Revd David Leese

Sunday 14th September

Ashbourne	10.30	Revd John Hellyer and Gareth Rutledge Holy Communion Tim Dutton and Amanda Peers
Brailsford	10.45	at all Saints
Kniveton	14.30	Revd David Leese Holy Communion
Muddy	10.00	in the Ashbourne area

Sunday 21st September

Ashbourne	10.30	Paul Taylor Catherine and Stuart Green
	18.30	Tim Dutton PRAISE
Brailsford	10.30	to be confirmed
Tissington	10.30	Lorraine Hawkins

Dates for the Diary - Meetings

Wednesday 3rd September 19.30

Local Preachers and Worship Leaders Meeting in Cornerstone

Saturday 13th September 10.00

District Gathering including the business of Synod in Grantham focusing on how to avoid mission drift.

Monday 15th September 19.00

Licensing Service for Revd Dwayne Engh at St Oswald's Church, Ashbourne

Saturday 27th September 19.00

Brailsford Methodist Church. Beyond the Blue present Island Spirit. Tickets £10.00 Refreshments from 18.30

Tuesday 14th October 19.30

One Church Circuit Meeting and Church Council at St. Oswald's Hall, Ashbourne

Sunday 14th September – Deadline for October edition of Connections, items to clifflewer@aol.com



**Front and above photos are taken recently by Mark Eden
of Lichfield Cathedral**