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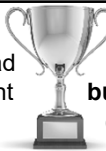
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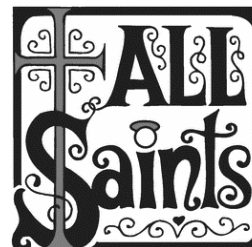
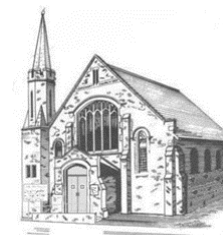
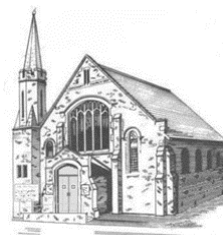
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 anyone who would, please contact, or get
 them to contact one of the Church Stewards,
 or the Editor,
 Gill Bentley, for details and costings!**

ST. THOMAS'S METHODIST CHURCH BURTON ON TRENT

FOCUS

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER

2025



Remembrance Day
 ■ NOVEMBER 11 ■
Lest we forget



First Sunday of Advent

ISSUE 231



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Remembrance Day Word Scramble

Answers

alrmtily	<u>M</u> <u>I</u> <u>L</u> <u>I</u> <u>T</u> <u>A</u> <u>R</u> <u>Y</u>
tcereyem	<u>C</u> <u>E</u> <u>M</u> <u>E</u> <u>T</u> <u>E</u> <u>R</u> <u>Y</u>
mrbmeree	<u>R</u> <u>E</u> <u>M</u> <u>E</u> <u>M</u> <u>B</u> <u>E</u> <u>R</u>
evciesr	<u>S</u> <u>E</u> <u>R</u> <u>V</u> <u>I</u> <u>C</u> <u>E</u>
umnlfro	<u>U</u> <u>N</u> <u>I</u> <u>F</u> <u>O</u> <u>R</u> <u>M</u>
loesidrs	<u>S</u> <u>O</u> <u>L</u> <u>D</u> <u>I</u> <u>E</u> <u>R</u> <u>S</u>
espterc	<u>R</u> <u>E</u> <u>S</u> <u>P</u> <u>E</u> <u>C</u> <u>T</u>
nlyutommc	<u>C</u> <u>O</u> <u>M</u> <u>M</u> <u>U</u> <u>N</u> <u>I</u> <u>T</u> <u>Y</u>
haccreatr	<u>C</u> <u>H</u> <u>A</u> <u>R</u> <u>A</u> <u>C</u> <u>T</u> <u>E</u> <u>R</u>
mnereercbma	<u>R</u> <u>E</u> <u>M</u> <u>E</u> <u>M</u> <u>B</u> <u>R</u> <u>A</u> <u>N</u> <u>C</u> <u>E</u>
nirantyf	<u>I</u> <u>N</u> <u>F</u> <u>A</u> <u>N</u> <u>T</u> <u>R</u> <u>Y</u>
nrevate	<u>V</u> <u>E</u> <u>T</u> <u>E</u> <u>R</u> <u>A</u> <u>N</u>



"Halloween is over, Bub. It's All Saints Day. Beat it!"

Submitted by Terry

Dear Friends,

"Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." (Hebrews 11: 1)

The letter to the Hebrews was written for people who were in danger of starting to lose interest in Jesus. It is possible that some were becoming disillusioned with faith because of their circumstances. Chapter 11 of the letter to the Hebrews is an encouragement to keep on believing and to keep on going in faith. Abraham and Sarah are held up as examples of people who kept going in faith even when the odds seemed to be stacked against them.

It is an inspiring story and has been an encouragement to many who have struggled, not least with the acute pain of childlessness, to keep on going in faith. There are many people who can testify to the joy of having their prayers answered against the odds, often having walked very painful pathways. Such stories should be celebrated but, there is an ever-present need to be sensitive to and supportive of those whose stories do not have the hoped-for, happy ending. There is a need to wrestle with our doubts about God's goodness. The writer to the Hebrews is refreshingly honest about these sorts of scenarios when in verse 13 of chapter 11, they speak of those who "died in faith without having received the promises."

The need to keep going in faith is not just important in the context of longing for a child like Abraham and Sarah. It is important in all manner of contexts. Undergoing medical treatment, caring for loved ones, maintaining a business and jobs that go with it in the trying times we find ourselves in.

Why some prayers are apparently answered and others are not will always be a mystery on this earth. But, as the writer of Hebrews reminds us, the earth is not the only reality, for there is also a better place – a heavenly one; a place where every tear will be wiped away and all will be made whole. This vision is offered as an encouragement to keep on going both to those who struggle and to those who don't.

One day all things will be made new but in the meantime the need for a better land, a heavenly one, here on earth is all too apparent.

We keep on going in faith not just for our own blessing and benefit, but on behalf of others who long for peace, for justice, for freedom; on behalf of those clinging on to their faith and needing to know that God has not abandoned them. "The true believer is not someone who disengages with the world in order to focus on heaven, but someone who tries to make the world more like heaven." (Alistair McGrath, *The Landscape of Faith*, p.236)

We pray regularly, every time we pray the Lord's prayer, for God's kingdom to come on earth as in heaven. How then might we be part of the answer to that prayer? Who do we know whose heart might be breaking at this time and need someone to help them keep on believing, keep on going?

When we pray and care for those in such situations, we can be assured that, "God is not ashamed to be called our God" (Hebrews 11 v16). Amen.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Rachel Moss

+ + + + +

Love

*Not just a word, but hands and feet,
Love stoops to serve, love walks the street.
It bears the cross, it breaks the bread,
It lifts the poor, it bows the head.*

*Love is the power that cannot die,
It speaks the truth, it lives the why.
Let Christ's great love your heart reform –
Be bold, be kind, let your love shine.*

Derby and Burton Hospitals Charity have written to thank St Thomas's for another donation of £222.28 for the Burton Cancer Unit. This relates to the coin jar regularly filled by members of the congregation. Many thanks for this continued support.

Wanted please

Would you be willing to offer to read the occasional bible reading at one of our services? If so, please have a word with one of our stewards.

Although we have a number of people who contribute flower donations for the Sunday services, we could do with a few more. If anyone would be willing to donate flowers occasionally, please have a word with Stella Hambleton.

Saturday Coffee Mornings – 1st Saturday each month 10-11.30am

A warm welcome is extended to everyone to come along and enjoy a hot drink and a choice of some delicious cakes.

Many thanks to our hosts for August and September and the following dates are confirmed.

4th October – Gill and Yvonne

1st November - Jane and Ray Currin and Sue Hill.

An advance notice re December 6th when there will not be the usual coffee morning but instead will hold an afternoon of Carols and Cake. Everyone welcome to this special tea at 2pm.

The next edition of Focus

Anyone wishing to have an article included in the next edition of Focus, should submit these to the editor by Sunday 2nd November. Contact details 07989568979 or gillbentley@hotmail.co.uk. Thank you.

Harvest Festival Service

On Sunday 21st September St Thomas's held their Harvest Festival service which was led by Mr Tom Parkinson.

The church had been decorated for the occasion and gifts of produce were on display, having been donated by members of the congregation. The large number of items, which included tin goods cereals and pasta, were later delivered to the YMCA foodbank in the town. Support for the foodbank is an ongoing initiative and thanks to all who contribute, not just at harvest time, but all year round.

A Prayer of Thanksgiving

Father in heaven all good gifts come from you. You send the sunshine and the rain, and it is through your love and care that we enjoy the harvest time.

Thank you for providing so richly for our needs and help us to share the good things we have with those who have little or nothing.

Amen.

+ + + + +

News from the Pews

Congratulations to Josephine Holling, who having successfully passed her 'A' level examinations, is now a student at York University studying Psychology.

Messages of Thanks

Many thanks to all who contributed to the Gift Aid appeal which raised the sum of £92.50.

Stan Coates

The church was full of people paying their respects at the funeral of Stan Coates on August 19th. Rev Rachel Moss led the service along with Stan and Iris's son Ian, a minister from Coventry. On the screen we had many old photographs telling the story of Stan and his beloved wife Iris's life together.

Many of us remember him as a local preacher which he took up once he retired. He and Iris used to sit with Olive and Sylvia when he wasn't leading the service with us (all were from the former Byrkley Street Methodist Church).

My memories of Stan go back to the Byrkley Street days, when I used to walk down to his house every Sunday morning so he could take me, along with Yvonne and Ian (their twins) to church, as we youngsters were all in the junior choir.

Some of us will remember the fabulous garden party they had for their Golden Wedding Anniversary when they lived in Tutbury Road, where they organised games for everyone on a beautiful summer's day.

We sent Stan off in a way he would have been proud of, with the church resounding to the sound of the wonderful hymns we Methodists love to sing, with Stella playing the organ magnificently.

Rest in Peace Stan.

Jane Currin

Support for our Veteran Heroes

A double story of a veteran and his grandad!

Lee West

Ex-Royal Army Medical Corps

Lee West was a Combat Medical Technician in the British Army for 10 years before both physical and mental health challenges meant he had to leave the career and community he loved. Fortunately, Lee knew he could reach out to Help for Heroes for support. But 80 years ago, when Lee's grandfather, Frank, was medically discharged after being injured during the D-day landings, support was not available.

In Lee's own words...

"In one explosion my grandad lost his job and his passion. It broke him. A shell exploded near him, and the shrapnel ripped through his right hand, basically destroying it. There was no option for him but medical discharge. He couldn't shoot a rifle, and he also couldn't play his trumpet. From that point, his life took a downward spiral. Looking back, he clearly faced severe mental health challenges. Today we'd call it PTSD, but in those days, it was called shell shock. Nobody talked to him about it, and he never really recovered"

"20 years ago, I also left the Army for medical reasons. And it broke me too. I struggled for a long time with my physical and mental health, but 80 years since my grandad's discharge, things have changed. Asking for help is still hard, but getting it is easier. Hiding my anxiety worked for years. Then I was in Bosnia, on my first tour, and a Serbian soldier put a gun to my head. I remember thinking two things. First was, "He can't do this." And the second was, "He's not shooting me with that dirty rifle". Then I was back in the Land Rover. Safe from the Serbian soldier. Unharmed. And I thought it was all over. Except it wasn't. By my second tour, I was really struggling. As a section commander, I had troops working under me, but I felt afraid of loads of things, and I couldn't understand why. When the smallest thing happened, I panicked. I realised I had to leave the military.

Remembrance Day Word Scramble

Unscramble the letters to find the Remembrance Day words from the list below.

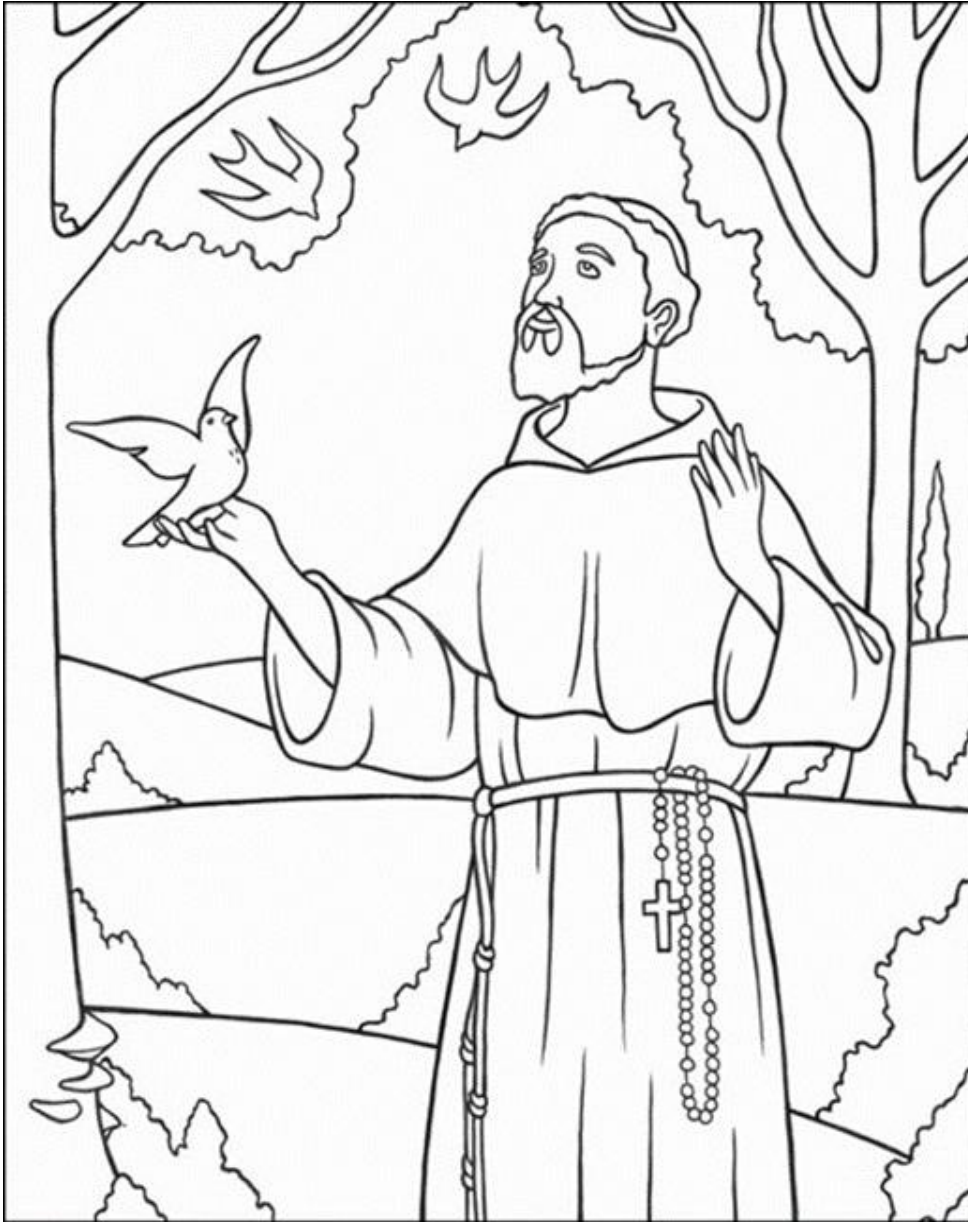
a l r m t i l y	_____
t c e r e y e m	_____
m r b m e r e e	_____
e v c i e s r	_____
u m n l f r o	_____
l o e s i d r s	_____
e s p t e r c	_____
n l y u t o m m c	_____
h a c c r e a t r	_____
m n e r e e r c b m a	_____
n i r a n t y f	_____
n r e v a t e	_____

Word List

cemetery	infantry	veteran
character.	military	service
community	remember	soldiers
remembrance	respect	uniform



Colour in the picture of Saint Francis of Assisi if you wish.



Submitted by Terry

For years after I left, I felt as though I'd failed. I thought I was a coward for being weak and losing the job I loved. And I felt really alone.

Back in 1944, when my grandad was medically discharged, he struggled alone. Now, thanks to generous supporters, Help for Heroes is the most incredible safety net for veterans like me."

Now in my own words.

Many veterans whether of old or of more recent times, like Lee, have suffered and do suffer from "Shell Shock" or as we now know it "Post Traumatic Stress Disorder" Anyone who has come into contact with service personnel, even those still serving, will know that they do not talk about their combat experiences very easily and do not spell out or release their concerns, anxieties or even fears. These pent-up disquiets can and do affect their on-going lives and for those that survive conflict, this is a sacrifice for them in a similar, but not equal, way to those veterans who paid the ultimate sacrifice. Veterans have made and do make these sacrifices willingly, for our safety, which, in my mind, makes it all the more important that we do NOT forget and continue to REMEMBER THEM!



Submitted by Terry

The Poppies of Remembrance Sunday

In late 1914, WW1 erupted across Northern France and Flanders, Great swathes of previously green fields and forests were blasted and bombed, leaving them bleak and barren, with seemingly every living thing destroyed.

But then in the Spring of 1915, something beautiful began to come out of all the destruction. Tens of thousands of bright red Flanders poppies began to put out tentative shoots across the endless vistas of mud. These resilient little flowers had actually flourished in the middle of so much chaos and destruction, because their seeds grow when exposed to sunlight, through disturbances to soil.

We all know that these endless fields of cheerful poppies, growing in the midst of such misery and destruction, were what inspired the Canadian doctor, Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, to write the now Famous poem 'In Flanders Fields'.

It was McCrae's poem which inspired an American academic named Moina Michael to adopt the poppy in memory of those who had fallen in the war. She got it adopted as an official symbol of Remembrance Across the United States, and worked with others who were trying to do the same in Canada, Australia, and the UK.

A French woman, Anna Guerin, who was in the UK in 1921, caught the same vision, and planned to sell the poppies in London. There she met Earl Haig, the founder of the Royal British Legion, who was persuaded to adopt the poppy as its emblem in the UK.

The Royal British Legion, which had been formed in 1921, ordered nine million poppies and sold them on 11th November that year. Ever since then, the red poppy has been a symbol of Remembrance, of support for the Armed Forces community, and also of hope for a peaceful future.

Sunday Services

October 2025

5th 10.00am - LA - Yvonne Luce

12th 10.00am - Denise Hancock

19th 10.00am - Vic Appleby

26th 10.00am - Rev'd David Leese
Sacrament of Holy Communion



November 2025

2nd 10.00am - LA - Terry Butler

9th 10.00am - Teresa Tilley *Remembrance Sunday*



16th 10.00am - Shirley Irons

23rd 10.00am - Rev'd Rachel Moss
Sacrament of Holy Communion



30th 10.00am - Ann Parkinson



FUNERAL

Stanley Arthur Coates 19th August Bretby Crematorium

Autumn Berry Traybake Pudding

This is a real warming pudding, with plenty of fruit. The measures serve 8 but can be changed proportionally for how many are being served and cooked in a smaller or larger tray, or you can just enjoy larger portions.

Preparation time: 10 minutes. Cooking time: 30 minutes. Serves: 8.

Ingredients:

500gm of Mixed Berries (Aldi do a convenient bag of frozen Black Forest fruit mix)

2 tbsp Light Brown Sugar

300gm Self-Raising Flour

150gm Light Brown Sugar

1 Egg (beaten)

180ml Semi-Skimmed Milk

125ml Oil (Olive; Sunflower or Vegetable)

Instructions:

1. Pre-heat the oven to 180°C; fan 160°C; 350°F or Gas Mark 4.

2. Place the berries into a 24 x 18 x 4cm deep tray, and sprinkle over the 2 tbsp brown sugar. (If using the Aldi Black Forest Fruit Mix you can use from frozen)

3. Place the rest of the brown sugar and flour into a bowl and mix well.

4. Beat the milk, egg and oil together well then add to the flour and sugar.

5. Stir, but do not overwork the mixture. Spoon over the fruit and sugar, spread out evenly, then pop into the oven for 25-30 minutes or until well browned and risen.

6. Remove from the oven and leave to cool for 10 minutes.

7. Serve with warm custard and a nice drizzle of honey.

Terry Butler

In Flanders Fields

By John McCrae, May 1915

In Flanders fields the poppies blow

Between the crosses, row on row,

That mark our place, and in the sky

The larks, still bravely singing, fly

Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago

We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,

Loved and were loved, and now we lie

In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:

To you from failing hands we throw

The torch; be yours to hold it high.

If ye break faith with us who die

We shall not sleep, though poppies grow

In Flanders fields.

Church Chuckles

"God Loves Drunk People Too"

A man and his wife were awakened at 3:00 am by a loud pounding on the door. The man gets up and goes to the door where a drunken stranger, standing in the pouring rain, is asking for a push.

"Not a chance," says the husband, "it is 3:00 in the morning!"

He slams the door and returns to bed.

"Who was that?" asked his wife...

"Just some drunk guy asking for a push," he answers.

"Did you help him?" she asks.

"No, I did not, it's 3am in the morning and it's absolutely pouring down out there!"

"Well, you have a short memory," says his wife. "Can't you remember about three months ago when we broke down, and those two guys helped us?"

I think you should help him, and you should be ashamed of yourself!

"God loves drunk people too you know."

The man does as he is told, gets dressed, and goes out into the pounding rain.

He calls out into the dark, "Hello, are you still there?"

"Yes," comes back the answer.

"Do you still need a push?" calls out the husband.

"Yes, please!" comes the reply from the dark.

"Where are you?" asks the husband.

"Over here on the swing," replied the drunk.

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"I just accidentally swallowed some scrabble tiles. The next visit to the toilet could spell disaster."

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

RECIPE CORNER

Minestrone Soup

Minestrone Soup is the perfect way to enjoy a huge variety of seasonal vegetables in one meal. It is also a good way of using up any leftover vegetables.

This recipe serves 6-8 and can be easily frozen in individual portions.

Ingredients :

3 tbsp olive oil

1 onion, diced

2 carrots, diced

2 celery stick, diced

500g peeled and diced vegetables, such as squash, celeriac or parsnips

2 potatoes, diced into 2-3cm pieces

1 large stem of rosemary, finely chopped (optional)

2 litres vegetable or chicken stock

400g can borlotti beans (or any whole pulse)

100g broken-up pasta or tiny pasta shapes

200g kale or other seasonal greens

Freshly grated Parmesan or vegetarian alternative.

Lemon juice, salt, pepper

Method :

1. Heat olive oil in a large saucepan over a medium heat and cook the onion, carrots and celery for 10 minutes or until softened.
2. Add the diced vegetables and potatoes and cook for further 2 minutes. Add the rosemary if using.
3. Pour the stock into the pan and simmer until the potatoes are starting to soften. Add the beans and pasta and simmer until the pasta is just cooked.
4. Now add the greens, stripped of any tough stalks and shredded into bite-sized pieces and bubble for 1-2 minutes.
5. Season the soup with Parmesan or vegetarian alternative, lemon juice, salt and pepper.

Gill Bentley

I then phoned Yvonne, who was enroute to a medical appointment and she agreed to come with me. About ten minutes later, another frantic call from Antony to tell me that the kittens were arriving and the mother was settled in the shed! I immediately phoned the RSPCA in Stretton and explained the situation and they agreed that we could take the cat and kittens that afternoon.

It was a very hot day and I realised we would need a carrier to transport the cat and her litter. Fortunately, it turned out that Antony had one in his shed which had belonged to his brother. It was very old but would do the job. The mother cat was black and white and appeared to be quite young. It was surprisingly easy for Yvonne to put the cats into the basket but she had to move a kitten or two into the basket first, to stop the mother jumping out to go back to her other kittens! On arrival at the RSPCA reception area, someone came and took away the mother and her kittens. After having dealt with some paperwork, we were informed that the cat was not chipped but she and the kittens appeared well. They said that eventually the mother cat would be spayed and the kittens spayed or neutered. All would go to good homes.

As we drove home, Yvonne thought our little adventure would make a good article for Focus. A month later, I called the RSPCA to check on our little friends and was told they were all doing just fine.

Thank you Antony for your care and concern. All ended well.

Gill Bentley

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Beware of these Contagious Diseases in Church

Frontophobia: a morbid fear of the front seats in church. The sufferer is struck by an attack just inside the church door and so collapses in the nearest back seat.

Church Meeting Paralysis: This can strike suddenly when a post in the church needs filling. A good dose of enthusiasm works wonders with this sad affliction.

President Donald Trump is visiting a Glasgow hospital, while showing up at one of his golf courses. He enters a ward full of patients with no obvious sign of injury or illness,

He greets one.

The patient replies:

Fair fa your honest sonsie face,
Great chieftain o' the puddin race,
Aboon them a ye take yer place,
Painch, tripe or thairm,
As lang's my airm.

Trump is confused, so he just grins and moves on to the next patient.

The next patient responds:

Some hae meat an canna eat,
And some wad eat that want it,
But we hae meat an we can eat,
So let the Lord be thankit.

Even more confused, and his grin now rictus-like, the President moves onto the next patient, who immediately begins to chant:

Wee sleekit, cowerin, timorous beasty,
O the panic in thy breasty,
Thou needna start awa sae hastie,
Wi bickering brattle

Now seriously troubled, Trump turns to the accompanying doctor and asks, 'Is this a psychiatric ward?'

'No,' replies the doctor, 'this is the serious Burns unit.'

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As you get older, every morning is the dawn of a new error.

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

I changed my iPod's name to Titanic. It's syncing now.

Submitted by Terry

Rowing Boat Experiences

In my late teens, a friend and I were on an educational course. Near the college where we studied was a river, which had narrowed at the point where we were situated. There one could hire a rowing boat, which we did in one of our lunch breaks.

Janice offered to do the rowing but after a while her arms became tired and so we changed seating (carefully) and I took my turn. We soon discovered that I had one arm a lot stronger than the other and so I was inclined to row almost in a circle!

Another day came and we decided that where the river broadened out was so picturesque that we would hire a boat further down the river where the flowered banks swept down to the water as did the trees, with some of their branches and leaves actually touching the river.

Janice decided to row while I was to steer. It was certainly lovely and I relaxed until I noticed that we were getting too near the bank and the overhanging trees, so I duly shouted 'go right' completely forgetting that, as she sat opposite me, that that was her 'left'! You can guess the rest – the boat tangled in the bank weeds and we needed to untangle our hair from the trees – which was done amid much mirth!

We thought to have another go with the rowing boat but that journey was very short-lived. We had hardly started when we noticed that our shoes and feet were getting very damp and our skirts began to swirl wetly round our legs. We had hired a boat with a leak!

After these experiences we decided that we would find something else to do in our lunch times!

As I relive this memory so many, many years further on, I became aware that we are all in our own 'boat of life'. Each of us could recount the experiences we have been through – some of such pleasure and some we would not want to go through again.

Paws for Thought

A Purr-fect Tale

This is a tale about a cat, a gentleman and two ladies ! It all began one Sunday at the end of June, when I received a text message from Antony, a member of the congregation at St Thomas's. The message alerted me to the fact that he had a cat who was appearing regularly in his back yard. He was worried that it needed feeding and he asked me to contact him. I gave Antony a call and ascertained that the cat had been a frequent visitor in recent days and he was worried about having the responsibility for its care. I suggested that maybe he leave some water or milk out for the cat but not to provide any food in case it belonged to someone. I suggested that he ask around his neighbours to see if they were missing a cat.

Over the next few days Antony and I had several chats and he said, having made enquiries from neighbours, no one had lost a cat. A few days later, Antony phoned to say the cat appeared not to want water or milk, but he was friendly and seemed to enjoy the fuss that Antony was giving him. I suggested to Antony that we should perhaps ring the RSPCA in Stretton, as they may be able to check if it was chipped. This I did on the Saturday morning. They were unable to do anything on that day, but suggested I ring back on Monday when they could arrange for me to take the cat in to be checked.

I must admit that I don't know a great deal about cats and am more a 'dog lover', so I contacted Yvonne, another of our church stewards, to see if she had a cat and more knowledge. Yvonne was very helpful and pointed out that it is normal for cats to be out and about at this time of the year but suggested that Antony check that the cat does not get shut in the shed and to try and ensure the door is closed properly. Again she said for Antony not to encourage the cat into the house or give it food.

Fairly early the following Monday morning, Antony rang to say that he thought the cat was looking to have kittens! With this new information of a possible impending birth, I said I would contact the RSPCA immediately to arrange to take the cat to them.

There should be a bowl by the pump.'

They went through the gate, and sure enough, there was an old-fashioned hand pump with a bowl beside it.

The traveller filled the water bowl and took a long drink himself, then he gave some to the dog.

When they were full, he and the dog walked back toward the man who was standing by the tree.

'What do you call this place?' the traveller asked.

'This is Heaven,' he answered.

'Well, that's confusing,' the traveller said. 'The man down the road said that was Heaven, too.'

'Oh, you mean the place with the gold street and pearly gates? Nope. That's hell.'

'Doesn't it make you mad for them to use your name like that?'

'No, we're just happy that they screen out the folks who would leave their best friends behind.'

Soooo...

Sometimes, we wonder why friends keep forwarding jokes or articles to us without writing a word. Maybe this will explain.

When you are very busy, but still want to keep in touch, guess what you do? You forward jokes or articles.

When you have nothing to say, but still want to keep contact, you forward jokes or articles.

When you have something to say, but don't know what, and don't know how, you forward jokes or articles.

Also to let you know that you are **still remembered, you are still important, you are still loved, you are still cared for**, guess what you get?..... A forwarded joke or article.

So, next time if you get a joke or article, don't think that you've been sent just another forwarded item, but that **you've been thought of today and your friend on the other end of your computer wanted to send you a smile.**

You are all welcome at my water bowl anytime!

Terry

Jesus' disciples were in a boat when a wind storm blew up (Mark chapter 4, verses 35-41) and they became very anxious and fearful. They called out to Jesus and the result was a great calm as He came to their aid and brought His peace into the situation.

Isn't it good to know that when 'storms' of various kinds come into 'our life's boat' that Jesus, if we invite Him to do so, will come into the midst of what we are going through. He gives us His calm, peace and assurance in all our circumstances – we only have to ask Him as we put our trust and faith in Him and know His presence is with us, whether it be in our joys, sorrows or in our difficulties.

Aileen Westwood

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St Thomas's Methodist Church
Christmas Celebration Concert
by
🎵 **The Breakaway Singers** 🎵
on
Wednesday 10th December 2025 at
2pm
Tickets £5: incl. Mince Pie & a Cuppa
Proceeds for Midland Air Ambulance

War and Peace

John Lennon wrote: ***'Imagine there's no countries, It isn't hard to do, nothing to kill or die for, And no religion too. Imagine all the people living life in peace.'*** But on Remembrance Sunday, we should reflect on war past and present and consider the real way to peace.

The way of war: *'what causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have, so you kill.'* (James 4:1-2). James reminds us that war has its basis in our own hearts, with the selfish desires that exploit, bully and kill others to get our own way. Sadly, when nations allow these inner selfish attitudes to determine their policy the result is war.
Only God can establish true peace.

The way of peace: Isaiah, 2,700 years before John Lennon, also imagined a future of peace without any war: ***'They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.'*** (Isaiah 2:4).

Only Jesus, the Prince of Peace, can bring true peace to our lives and world. Jesus did not experience the horror of battle, but He did die an horrific death at the hand of the Romans. He gave His life sacrificially, as He took God's anger at our sin on Himself and went on to conquer death in His resurrection. He did this out of love for us and calls us to love others in the same way: ***Greater love has no one than this : to lay down one's life for one's friends.'*** (John 15:13).

How can we demonstrate such love ourselves? We can be confident in God's plan to bring an end to all wars when Jesus returns.

Article written by Canon Paul Hardingham a retired Anglican Vicar from the Manchester area, considering the reality of warfare.

This explains why we forward jokes or articles:

A man and his dog were walking along a road. The man was enjoying the scenery, when it suddenly occurred to him that he was dead.

He remembered dying, and that the dog walking beside him had been dead for years. He wondered where the road was leading them.

After a while, they came to a high, white stone wall along one side of the road. It looked like fine marble. At the top of a long hill, it was broken by a tall arch that glowed in the sunlight.

When he was standing before it he saw a magnificent gate in the arch that looked like mother-of-pearl, and the street that led to the gate looked like pure gold. He and the dog walked toward the gate, and as he got closer, he saw a man at a desk to one side.

When he was close enough, he called out, 'Excuse me, where are we?'

'This is Heaven, sir,' the man answered. 'Wow! Would you happen to have some water?' the man asked.

Of course, sir. Come right in, and I'll have some ice water brought right up. 'The man gestured, and the gate began to open.

'Can my friend,' gesturing toward his dog, 'come in, too?' the traveller asked.

'I'm sorry, sir, but we don't accept pets.'

The man thought a moment and then turned back toward the road and continued the way he had been going with his dog.

After another long walk, and at the top of another long hill, he came to a dirt road leading through a farm gate that looked as if it had never been closed. There was no fence.

As he approached the gate, he saw a man inside, leaning against a tree and reading a book.

'Excuse me!' he called to the man. 'Do you have any water?'

'Yeah, sure, there's a pump over there, come on in.'

'How about my friend here?' the traveller gestured to the dog.

Circuit News

Utttoxeter's Week-Long big event for school children!

This November Utttoxeter Methodist Church is hosting a fantastic Event called Life Expo – a fun and interactive week designed to help Year 5 and 6 children explore the Christian faith in a fresh and meaningful way.

The event will run during school hours from Monday 3rd to Friday 7th November and will be held in the church worship space and hall. Set-up will take place on the Saturday before, followed by a short volunteer training session. And yes – there will be drinks and biscuits provided!

This is a great chance to encourage children as they discover more about prayer, worship and faith.

Volunteer helpers are needed in a few different areas:

- Helping in the café
- Chatting with and supporting children in the “tech” room (don't worry no skills needed!)
- All else fails, praying before, during, or after the sessions”

If you are interested, please contact Rev Rachel Wood.

Save the Date !

Friday 21st November 7.30pm at The Well.

The Derbyshire Community Male Voice Choir will be performing. Welcome to all! Tickets cost £8, under 16's go free but must be accompanied by an adult. To book your place please email Laura at office@essdmethodistcircuit.org.

Regular circuit updates are available on the *circuit facebook page*, which will include details of any upcoming events and courses, as well as any amendments to church services.

You are also encouraged to visit your Circuit website essdmethodistcircuit.org

Wednesday Group

On Wednesday 9th July a well known Forensic Lecturer, Paul Newsham, gave us a talk on “Biometrics” entitled ‘**There will never be another you**’. Before he began I read part of a poem by Trina Graves ‘You are Unique’, which is written in full below.

Paul a retired Forensic Expert Witness, Head of Department, explained about the uniqueness of the Human Being and how this is being used in today's modern society and world environments.

Eyes, Teeth, Fingerprints, DNA and Earprints were explained as was much more.

Paul also brought into his talk Theology, Philosophy, Biology, Ethics as well as Forensics and Biometrics which made the talk very interesting and gave the group much to think about.

It was an interesting and fascinating presentation.

You are Unique

In all the worlds seven billion or more
There's not another you, and that's for sure
Wherever you go, you'll never find two
Because there is only one of you.

No one has the same teeth, eyes or hair
Your smile, your frown or the way you stare
You are so special and beautiful too
The world just isn't complete without you.

The way you sing and the way you talk
The way you run and the way you walk
All these things make you unique
No one in the world has your physique

Your own unique body, you will find
Contains your Spirit and your Mind
Looking after your body is important to do
But remember, its not the only part of you.

Your mind is an unlimited, powerful tool
Not only to be used for learning in school
You have the ability and power to create anything
With the energy of joy, what makes your heart sing.

It's important to know what you believe you create
But don't worry about the past, it's never too late
To change your life, start from today.
Be happy in all you think, do and say.

There is the most amazing Energy of Light
A part of you, though hidden from sight
You really are a Being of Light and Love
With a body that fits, covering like a glove

You can talk to this Light inside of you
It can guide your way in what to do
Sit still and be quiet, and you will find
The answers will appear into your mind

Some call it your Spirit and some your Soul
It is the real you and makes you whole.

Trina Graves – June 2013

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On Wednesday 13th August we held our AGM. It was a hot humid afternoon and 'Cadent' were working in Mona Road and had 'blocked off' both ends of the road! I didn't think many people would come to the meeting but fortunately I was wrong. There were 20 members who came and I thank them all for their support.

We had some important decisions to make concerning the future of the Wednesday Group. The Rev Rachel Moss kindly joined us for part of the meeting to help us to make those decisions.

We held another raffle that afternoon and raised a further £45 for the Church. Stella gave the Treasurer's Report and we are pleased to report that we are able to give £250 to the Church towards the use of the room, heating and lighting, plus another £111 from two previous raffle afternoons, making a total of £361 for the Church from the Wednesday Group.

We are holding a Christmas Celebration afternoon on Wednesday 10th December at 2pm. We have invited the Breakaway Singers to entertain us and there will be some carols to join in singing with them. Tickets will be available nearer to the date priced at £5 to include the entertainment, a drink of tea or coffee and a mince pie. Members voted that the money raised at the event will go to The Midlands Air Ambulance. We do hope that as many people as possible will support us at this event. Everyone is welcome.

Margaret Clark

Dates for your diary

(Meetings at 2pm unless stated otherwise)

Wednesday 8th October – Guess Who?

Wednesday 12th November – Annual Lunch at The Beacon Hotel
12.30pm for 1pm.

Wednesday 10th December – Christmas Celebration at 2pm
'The Breakaway Singers' – Tickets £5
(including tea/coffee and mince pie)
Charity event for 'The Midlands Air Ambulance.