

Lamentations 3:23

Great is Thy faithfulness



RISLEY INDEPENDENT METHODIST CHURCH, FEARNHEAD

Autumn 2024

Greetings

I was quite amazed to find out this week that our church Newsletter celebrates its 25th birthday this year. The very first edition having been published in November 1999.

I can still remember being asked by Ron and Lorna if I could help to pull something together and subsequently bringing a first draft to the church business meeting where it was duly decided that we should start to have a church Newsletter on a monthly basis. I think if I knew back then that a quarter of a century later I would still be churning them out I might have politely declined!

I am not sure exactly how many editions we have published since then but it feels a little bit crazy to me now that when we first started we used to have a new edition

every single month. That was very ambitious so after about five years we moved to doing it every other month.

It stayed that way for a long time but then six or seven years ago it was becoming clear that the amount of news, updates and events that we needed to share were becoming fewer so we changed to a cycle of issuing it about once every quarter. So now we aim at doing one around Easter, one around Harvest and one at Christmas, with a summer edition thrown in now and again if there is anything extra to report.

Anyway, all that is a very long-winded way to say here is our latest edition! I'm not sure what number it is but we are up somewhere

around one-hundred-and-fifty Newsletters in total so far. That's a lot of Greetings (of which Ron did the vast majority over the years), Focus articles (mostly by me) and an awful lot of silly stories and jokes in The Final Word for which I have to thank you all - so many people have contributed those over the years.

Our Newsletter is also very well-travelled—in times past at least a couple of members of our congregation sent copies to relatives overseas in Australia and the U.S.A. And since we also started sharing it on the church website, it has been read by people in many different countries.

The new editions always seem to be well-received but,

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Special points of interest:

- *A twenty-fifth birthday!*
- *A Walking Day to remember!*
- *Christmas Fayre date*
- *A couple of cautionary tales for husbands*

they really do rely on you, the readers, giving us as much information as possible to make it a good read. So please, don't stop with your contributions. Please continue to share articles, stories, poems, readings, news, reci-

pes, updates from other churches—they are all welcome. And you never know, your small but perfectly formed little article might end up being read by someone on the other

side of the world.

I wish you happy reading...

May God bless you!

James

Visiting Preachers

We alternate our morning and evening services from one week to the next, the schedule for our Sunday services for the next few months is listed below.

The only exceptions are Harvest (6th October), the 10th November when we will have an extra morning service for Remembrance and December 22nd when we have our two carol services.

As always, morning services will start at 10:45 and evenings will commence at 6:00.

October

**6th am— Philip Gleave
6th pm— James Tobiasen
13th pm—Stuart Hunter *
20th am—Chris Mayes *
27th pm—David Grimshaw**

November

**3rd am—Frank Pemberton
10th am—Chris Mayes
10th pm—Ken McDermott *
17th am— Christine Ormerod *
24th pm—Phil McDermott**

December

**1st am—Warrington YFC
8th pm—David Okell *
15th am— Ian Hunter *
22nd am— Family Carol Service - Chris Mayes
22nd pm—Candlelit Carol Service—James Tobiasen
25th 10:00 am—Christmas Praise—Chris Mayes
29th am—Lester Ather-ton**

Services marked * indicate sacramental services

What's On

Our current schedule of mid-week meetings and other activities is listed below. Although this is the view at the time of writing, please pay attention to the weekly notices for any changes or further updates:

Bible Study—our Autumn series of studies is now well under way and is be-

ing lead by Paul Wheeler of our Stockton Heath fellowship. It is simply called The Bible Course and gives an introduction to and overview of the whole of the Bible—from the beginning of the Old Testament through to the end of the New Testament. As always, the meeting is on a

Tuesday evening at 7:30pm, Although the course has already started you can join in at any time but please add your name to the list in the porch or speak with Lester so that we know you will be attending.

Coffee morning & lunch

-club— The coffee morning runs on Thursdays from 10am—12noon and is followed by a light lunch from noon until 1:30. It is completely free though donations are gratefully accepted.

Boomerang (for school-age kids) & crèche (for little ones)—Runs as part of the Sunday

morning service from 10.45 onwards till approximately 12 noon.

This means that the next few occurrences will be on the 22nd October, 5th, 12th and 19th of November, 3rd and 17th December.

And in addition we now have a monthly **Bible Craft** session—these will run on 6th October and

3rd November—the December date is yet to be confirmed.

Prayer Meeting—this takes place on a Wednesday evening from 7.30 onwards.

Focus

We suddenly seem to be living in a world that is more dangerous than it was just a few weeks ago. And certainly more so than it was a year ago. Of course we have always lived with what the Bible refers to as *wars and rumours of wars*. The leaders of men seem to have very few problems with provoking conflicts, and need few excuses to bring death and destruction.

I know that's perhaps not the cheeriest start to a church Newsletter article that we've ever had but we cannot escape the realities of living in a sin-sick world and although the terrible scenes we see on the news and in our newspapers may be half a word away, we live in a world that is in many ways smaller than it was just a few years ago. And that brings many of the world's problems closer to home.

For us as Christians it brings a number of challenges too. How do we carry our Christian sense of hope when there is so much darkness? How should we pray when there is such overwhelming and relentless destruction? Is there anything we can practically do to change any of these situations?

I do not pretend to know the answers to these questions but that does not mean that we should not continue to hope, and to pray and to act in a Christ-like manner in any situation in which we find ourselves.

So often in situations like this we can find great hope and encouragement in the Psalms. Many of the Psalms that encourage us to hope might seem naïve in some ways, but that is not the case. Because so often the words of those Psalms were written not as a pie-in-the-sky vague

wish that things could turn out OK, but in fact were based on the real experience of people who had gone through that life-and-death turmoil for themselves. This wasn't theological theory. No. Instead it was the Psalmist's very real and lived experience.

So when we read in Psalm 25 *You are God my Saviour, and my hope is in you all day long.*

Or in Psalm, 31, *Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the LORD.*

Or in Psalm 119 *You are my refuge and my shield; I have put my hope in your word.*

OR in Psalm 130 *I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope.*

It is not a vague daydream but a reflection of God's

eternal power to save. It is proven over and over again in the lives of David and the other Psalmists who had faced real danger, war, threats on their lives, raging enemies. But because of their faith in their great and eternal God, they could trust in Him to bring them through that *valley of the shadow of death*.

Yes, we live in a dark world, but we also live in a beauti-

ful world and have a Saviour whose love and grace is eternal and can give us hope in the most desperate situations, in the darkest hours.

As the hymn writer says
"All my hope on God is founded".

I hope and pray that we never have to face such dangers but when the world around us is falling apart, who else can we look to but to Al-

mighty God?

The writer Corrie Ten Boom—someone who through her sufferings at the hands of the nazis in World War II knew darkness only too well—was able to say: "You can never learn that Christ is all you need, until Christ is all you have." Not wishful thinking but a sure and steadfast hope in her Living Saviour.

Special Events

Our Harvest Services— on Sunday 6th October we will have two services for Harvest. In the morning (at 10:45) Philip Gleave will lead us in worship and then in the evening we will have a 6:00 service when James Tobi- asen will take the pulpit. The choir will also sing at the evening service and there will be refreshments served in the schoolroom after the later celebration.

If you would like to contribute to the Harvest display please bring along your gifts on Saturday 5th when the church will be open from around 10:30 until mid-afternoon to decorate the church.

As always, if you will be decorating a window, you can do this any time be-

fore the services start but the church will be open through most of Saturday. However the time to take down your display may be limited because of the work that will start on replacing the windows on the Monday following.

There will be a collection on the day of the Harvest services in support of the local homeless charity Room At The Inn plus we will donate all tinned, packeted and long-life foodstuff to Warrington Foodbank. Any fresh produce will be shared out amongst the congregation.

Christmas Fayre— we will hold a Christmas Fayre on Saturday 30th November. There will be gifts and cakes for sale as

well as refreshments so please come along and get into the festive spirit. All proceeds from this event will go towards church funds.

Carol Services— it might seem a long way away but really it's not so far off... on Sunday 22nd December we will have our usual two Christmas Carol Services—Family Carols in the morning and the Candlelit Carol Service in the evening. Timings etc, are listed in the Visiting Preachers section of this Newsletter. Please get them into your diary and invite friends, neighbours and family to them. Wouldn't it be great to have the church full for these special occasions?

Walking Day 2024

Preparations for the walking day in 2024 were a roller coaster ride this year with an initial green light given by our Churches Together organizing committee followed by safety concerns which lead to a cancellation of the whole event. This was then followed by a last minute reprieve when members of the Poulton-with-Fearnhead Parish Council stepped in to save the day after a massive social media outcry.

Confusion had reigned for a short while but, with prayer, the event was once again scheduled to go ahead again this year.

True it had a shortened route starting and finishing at Bennet's Recreation ground but, as it turned out this worked really well. Some of the usual churches and schools did not participate (we hope they'll be back next year!) but despite this there was an excellent turn out on the day. The fact that the churches did not have to provide all the road mar-

shals this year meant that more of the congregations could join their churches in the Walk of Witness. This meant that there were excellent numbers of people processing on the day.

Furthermore with all the controversy over the threat to the procession, the spectators and well-wishers were out in massive numbers enjoying our churches joining together to show our love for the Lord in the sunshine.

Our own Church congregation and Sunday School walkers were joined by the Brownies from the Winwick pack and this increased our 'presence' considerably which was fantastic. The Brownies had asked to join us for the first time as the Warrington Walking Day was inconvenient for them as it takes place on a Friday which is of course a school day and is also difficult for their parents to get to. They had a wonderful time walking in the bright sunshine and joined us all in chapel for a prop-

er 'Walking Day Tea' of jelly and strawberries by our lovely team of caterers when they got back to our church.

2024 Walking Day Banner

This year's Walking Day gave us an opportunity to show off our newly restored Walking Day Banner. We had shortened the poles by eighteen inches to reduce the effect of the wind last year but the banner itself was still so large that it was like holding back a sailing ship when it caught the breeze. The banner was originally embroidered by Mrs. Haskey of Padgate in 1985 who had made several other banners for local churches. Apparently it took four-hundred hours to complete and was made in the memory of Miss Janey Cook and Mrs. May Houghton as a tribute to their work in the Risley IM Sunday School. After nearly fifty years' service the stitching on the banner was brittle and restoration was overdue as well as

the requirement to make it smaller.

After searching through South Lancashire for a skilled and confident needleworker we were tipped off that there was a shop in Atherton who might take on the challenge, so we unshipped the banner from the Sunday School wall and took it to 'Hey Ho, Let's Sew'.

To our delight we found there a wonderful seamstress, Sandra Rawsthorne who had moved to Atherton when she married her husband Alan ten years before the banner was made. Sandra had been sewing from the age of ten but started working as a hairdresser until she retired. She had always sewn and made clothes for her three children among other projects, but when she had retired, she started she started to follow her calling and help out at the local fabric shop then owned by the late Joan Weir. Now Sandra works two days each week in the shop and also teaches people to sew on Wednesday evenings at a class in the Snug Coffee Shop in Atherton.

Thank you Sandra for

your work on this massive project, it is a blessing for us as we continue to walk with it on our Walking Day and we pray that every stitch that you made was a blessing to you. The restoration is almost invisible unless you look closely when you will find a little twinkle in the eye of the dove of peace that represents the Holy Spirit looking down on our walkers.

Furthermore those brave fellows that volunteer to carry the banner every Walking Day will also bless you every time the wind catches the shortened banner.

Below is a picture of Mrs. Sandra Rawsthorne alongside our banner that she shortened and restored with pride for our 2024 Padgate Walking Day Procession



Many thanks to Chris Mayes for this article and the photo!

Additional Notices

Bible Crafts— it has been running for a few months now but as this is our first Newsletter since it started, a quick word about the exciting new addition to the Boomerang activities. Once each month instead of the usual 'Sunday School' kind of session for our children, we now have a full craft-filled lesson. Painting, drawing, baking, making... it's all happening. The Bible Crafts are scheduled for 6th October and 3rd November and are open to all children aged 11 and under.

Sunday Morning Services— one small but important change— as I'm sure you now, we serve tea & coffee after our morning services usually once each month. The plan for November was that we would do this on Sunday 3rd, but as we will now have an additional service for Remembrance Sunday on the 10th, the refreshments will now be served after the service on that day – Sunday the 10th - instead of the previous week.

Thank you (1)— we recently held our annual fund-raising Coffee Morning in support of MacMillan Cancer Care. So a big thank you to anyone who

baked, supported, attended, contributed to, provided refreshments for any part of the day. At the last count we had raised a staggering £526.98 but the donations are still trickling in. We never thought we would top last year's final total but somehow we've done it. What a brilliant lot you are!

Thank you (2)— many thanks to the hardy troupe who recently turned out to help tidy the garden and parking areas around the church buildings. On Saturday September 21st we spent a few hours clearing weeds, cutting back rampant foliage, generally tidying up and even painting! As always a wonderful "bagging" was provided by Judie and Kathleen who kept the volunteers plied with egg and bacon rolls and plenty of tea.

Your memories— we've asked before and had no response (shame on you!)... if you could perhaps write a few (or, even better, many) words to describe your memories of our church and its members, of our village and so on so that we could include them in the church website history pages, that would be just brilliant. Please don't be shy—we have two or three entries in there already so your words would be

in great company, and it would be great to add some more. Whatever you do, don't think that your story and your memories won't be interesting... only you can tell your story! So please get writing! Any questions, please speak with James.

Windows—a reminder that no sooner will we have the Harvest services out of the way than the work will start on replacing the windows in our church building. We have been supported financially by the Independent Methodist Connexion in this hugely expensive undertaking. The work will likely take a few weeks but we will work with Irlam Glass to minimise disruption to our services and meetings.

Foodbank—our collection currently is for the Warrington Foodbank—pretty much any foodstuff that is still in date and has a long shelf-life will be very welcome—but just in case you need some ideas... tinned fruit, tinned puddings tinned beans, soup, pasta, cream crackers, biscuits, long-life juice, will all be appreciated.

The Final Word

Bowled Over...

Husband: "when I get mad at you, you never fight back. How do you control your anger?"

Wife: "I clean the toilet bowl"

Husband: "How does that help?"

Wife: "I use your tooth-brush"

He Put His Foot Down...

A man went on an assertiveness course at work, and as a result decided that things needed to change at home too.

When he got home he told his wife "I want supper on the table each evening when I get home from work, I want you to run me a hot bath and scrub my back. Then I want you to turn back the sheets, warm the bed and lay out my pyjamas. In the morning, do you know who is going to button my shirt and tie my tie?"

"Yes" replied his wife.

"the undertaker."

Autumn Leaves

By Debrah Ann Belke

Autumn brings to the soul relief,
As hot Summer days slip to an end
God sent the season for weary hearts
To restore, repair and mend.

Unlike the Autumn trees,
That shed their changing leaves
God sent the season for failing hearts
To adhere, embrace and cleave.

Just as with the Autumn winds,
There comes a refreshing rain
God sent the season for fraying hearts
To increase, grow and gain.

The Autumn sun is slow to climb,
And dips earlier into the night
God sent the season for sleepy hearts
To rise, shine and awake in His light.

God gave to us the Autumn season,
So we could have respite and rest
For it is the season for our beset souls
To see how much we are truly blessed!

Contributions and donations of articles for the Newsletter are always very welcome. Items sent by email are best (because it makes getting the words into the Newsletter so much easier) but articles copied or cut from other magazines are fine, handwritten pieces are good too. EVERYTHING is very gratefully received so don't be shy!

CONTACT DETAILS

RISLEY INDEPENDENT METHODIST CHURCH

Website: risleyimc.com
Facebook: [Risley IM Church](https://www.facebook.com/RisleyIMChurch)



Fearnhead Lane
Fearnhead
Warrington
Cheshire
WA2 0BY

Telephone 01925 825956
E-mail risleyimchurch@yahoo.co.uk

Newsletter Contact Details

Editor: James Tobiasen
Telephone 0775 281 0092
E-mail postcardcat@gmail.com

Next Newsletter:

There is no fixed date for the next issue currently but the broad target at this point is to publish sometime before Christmas