

Creating a culture of trust is exactly where doing good and doing well coincide

It's clear that most of our church members not only recognise the need for change but also welcome it. However, it's crucial that this change is implemented correctly. We don't want to simply patch up the problem; we need to address it thoroughly to prevent future issues. Building trust is essential as we navigate through this change. We'll only have confidence in the change if we trust our leadership to make the right decisions.

If our Connexion serves as a trust training centre allowing people to be honest about their fears, beliefs, and questions. Engaging in honest conversations about truth, even when beliefs differ, rather than silencing or judging people. Practicing honesty, integrity, and respect in every aspect of church life can help repair broken trust. We have a responsibility to take risks that reinforce trust in God. Living in fear due to broken trust prevents us from experiencing the fullness of God's vision for us. In cultures of high trust, barriers are broken, and people become beacons of hope and life to those who are weary.

Ineffective leadership can disillusion members and erode their faith. Organisations with the highest trust recognise that asking for help is a two-way street. Emotionally connected leaders let their employees know they need their help to build the best Connexion possible. Clear direction and effective decision-making are established when the mission, vision, and values are defined. When trust is lacking, it is



important to understand the causes, warning signs, and strategies for enhancing trust. Encouraging healthy communication, promoting active listening skills, and conflict resolution can help prevent misunderstandings, tensions, and conflicts from arising. Addressing any conflicts promptly and encourage leaders to work towards a resolution. Few things erode trust faster than when people believe information is being withheld from them. Encouraging transparency, honesty, and vulnerability is a great way to cultivate trust. We should and must be one of the primary places where people can learn to trust, exercise trust, and become trustworthy because we trust God and God trusts us.

When leaders are not open about their decisions, members may become suspicious and distrustful. Similarly, if leaders are not open to hearing members' opinions, it can create a sense of disconnect and mistrust. Feedback from leaders and members can help identify areas of strength and weakness within the organisation, and should be taken seriously, using feedback to grow and improve.

When people feel heard and valued, they develop a stronger

sense of belonging to their organisation and more comfortable voicing their views. We build trust in those who take the time to carefully listen to us by giving others undivided attention, suspending judgment, and not jumping to conclusions. In a high-trust environment, people are willing to ask questions, share ideas, or raise tough issues to help move things forward. Let it be messy and follow God through the refining process. Trust is essential for people to have the confidence to speak straight.

Leaders should be expected to perform to the best of their abilities and held accountable for their actions, taking ownership of their responsibilities, by providing them with the necessary tools and resources. Fostering a sense of ownership and empowerment among leaders increases engagement, commitment, and motivation to fulfil Gods vision. Building a strong Connexion involves creating a leadership pipeline, fostering trust, and emphasising character growth. Essential elements include ongoing training, collaboration, and clear goals.

Emotional and spiritual support, recognising achievements, and

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offering opportunities for rest are crucial for maintaining a healthy, engaged leadership team. Regular evaluations and feedback ensure continuous improvement. Connexional leadership can be demanding and stressful, so it's crucial to allow leaders to take time for rest and renewal providing non-judgmental environment where they feel safe to share their struggles. By prioritising their well-being, they will be more effective in their roles. When leaders are well-rested, they will be more effective and engaged in their roles.

People feel they can depend on organisations where meaningful appreciation is extended regularly in all directions, dependability elevates trust. Organisational trust develops when everyone feels confident that they have a seat at the table. It won't happen if inclusion and respect aren't equitable across the board. If individuals feel valued the team is strengthened. Seeking diversity in leadership can bring fresh perspectives and ideas to the table. It ensures that the leadership team

represents its members and the community they serve. Actively seeking out leaders from different age groups, cultures, and backgrounds can create a more inclusive and welcoming environment that reflects the diversity of God's kingdom.

So, how do we move forward? By firstly waiting on God through bible study, prayer and fasting. Then developing a strategic plan to help the leadership team create a roadmap for achieving goals and fulfilling its mission. The plan should identify organisational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and develop strategies to achieve the goals and address the challenges, assign responsibilities, and establish timelines for implementation. We monitor the progress towards achieving the Connexions goals and regularly adjusting the plan as needed is crucial for success. Celebrating achievements and use them to motivate and encourage along the way. And we must be open to feedback and suggestions and be

willing to adjust the plan accordingly.

Times have changed and we must change with them. There is more emphasis now on digital and accessibility via social media. We want bright burst of colour, and forward-thinking ideas because 'that's not how we do it here' is losing us more than it is gaining us. We can't grow a kingdom that no one wants to be in. So, we must change, we must move, we can't stand still and wait for the inevitable end. We must build from the inside out, if our current members and churches aren't happy, then this is what we mend first. Then we grow. For the people reading this that feel excited and anxious, willing for the change to revive our faith, get involved, lets move, lets change. For those that think it will never work, He will show us what to do, He will move us in the right direction, we just have to trust.

MEMORIES OF BUCKLEY STREET

My association with Buckley St Church goes back some 60+ years. Just after my calling to preach I came to Buckley Street with Gordon Gleave and took the children's address.

It was here at Buckley Street I was interviewed for the ministry. **Walter Froggat** was on the interview Panel. During the interview someone asked me which Sunday paper I read and before I had time to answer Walter said, "Sunday Papers? I never buy a Sunday Paper. There's only one book to read." You know I never bought or read a Sunday paper since that day 60 years ago.



Another memory of Walter, as the church reduced in size, Walter with his powerful voice set the speed of the singing. Must have been frustrating for Alan. He worked at British Aluminum and was often mocked for his faith which never bothered him.

There was also **Jim Ryder** another very sincere man. He was ministers secretary for the circuit. He sent a card out with your exam results. Always with a word of encouragement. He took me to Bryn church as part of my training. It was then that I learnt of how in his

younger days he trekked with other young men to take the Gospel to North Wales.

Then there was **Mary Culleton**. Mary and her hats. Mary was never ashamed to share her love of Jesus. My favourite words she would tell, very often where she had been

with the words "So I shared my Testimony."

She came to the circuit meetings with another stalwart, Doug Ward a lovely man. Sometimes they would travel together, and Doug would ask, "How are we going to get Back?" Her reply "Doug the Lord has more than one car!"

Other stalwarts, **Jack Scott** was an undertaker with a wicked sense of humour I think it was Jack who would say when he shook your hand that it was nice to hold a warm hand.



Last but by no means least The Young man on the organ **Alan Johnson**. Who has faithfully served the Lord and the church here for over 70 years. From an early he had a desire to learn the piano and organ, so he could serve the Lord.

In finishing, my good friend Rev Bill Matthews said during the week Gordon couldn't have taken you to a better place to start. Bill said he preached here 56 years ago and said you were very encouraging. They were just such lovely people. Most of us as young ministers felt this even when numbers were low.

In a book called the Quaker Methodists, in a chapter headed 'Let us praise famous men' was written



this quote. "None ever lived more greatly, none have left a better legacy in this they came as close as plain folks could to the example of Jesus and his disciples."

This is how we should remember Buckley Street, a job well done!

Ken Irwin—Lymm IM

News from High Legh Christian Fellowship

We continue to make progress with Mission Northwood and with God's help, we are sure that the outcome is going to be multi-layered. In fact, we were delighted to receive an invitation from Appleton Independent Methodist Church for their Saturday evening Easter Praise. Four or five of our folks made it to the event and we were encouraged to hear that they fully expect us to be eventually welcomed into the Warrington Circuit.

Our folks held a combined leaflet and door knocking exercise prior to Easter, including some on Good Friday morning. Whilst some hoped for activities were cut back due to inclement weather nevertheless, by God's grace, the place was full for our Sunday evening event.

The worship was a little more traditional (but jubilant) with sympathy for the expectations of any visitors. Two of our young folks gave testimonies and the Gospel was preached, bearing witness

from several people that they had been ministered to. As far as we know, there were no converts on the evening this time, but we are encouraged by a few folks who, having been on occasion before, now intend to come more regularly (compare Acts.17:32).

No one wanted to rush away and everyone present stayed for fellowship and the lovely refreshments. Notwithstanding that our young people were able to meet two more young ladies who turned up on the night with their family, including younger siblings. The result is that the fellowship of young folks has gained two more who, are now included in their Telegram Group and invited to mid-week Bible studies on Zoom. We confess to being delighted with this development as it means young Christians are being drawn together from all over the North West. No doubt that the future beckons them all to take over the reins in God's own time.

As much of the ministry of High Legh is intended to become a spiritual hub which ties up with other churches, we are strengthened also at Kirkhall Lane and the House Group in Wigan. The monthly street evangelism and weekly Coffee Mornings could not take place at Kirkhall Lane but for the fellowship of a wider network of Christians working together. Notwithstanding, we are also mutually encouraged from meeting together on Friday nights at Wigan and Sunday mornings at KHL.

We are conscious that the work has its adversaries and opponents. The intention is to include them in our praying, that the Lord will visit them with sufficient grace. To those who love us and support us in prayer, we ask that you include them also, always praying for a breakthrough.

Roger Stone (for all the folks involved).

Independent Methodist Facts

How much do you know about our denomination?

In this short occasional series, we begin its formation and development of Annual Meetings.

The denomination came into being when five independent churches of Methodist origins (formed in 1790s) from towns in the North-West first came together in the 1800s.

There was a church from Manchester, Macclesfield, Stockport, Oldham, and one from Warrington. The Warrington Church met in Bank Street, now somewhere under the new Cineworld cinema in the town. The Bank Street Church later became Friars Green Church and is the only one of the original five churches still in existence.



Friar's Green Church in Cairo Street, Warrington, is regarded by some as the 'mother' church of Independent Methodism. The members of the original Bank Street Methodist Church disassociated (1790s) themselves from the Wesleyan Methodists when their Minister, who was based in Northwich, and who rarely visited the church forbade them from meeting for fellowship in their own homes. The new fellowship who built their first Chapel on St. Austin's Lane close to the site of the Priory of Austin Friars. The new Friar's Green Church brought together both Methodist and

Quaker principles and practices and those who worshipped there were known as Quaker Methodists. The leading light of the church in its formative years was a chairmaker, named Peter Philips.

Peter Philips (1778-1853) was the third son of the Town Crier and had no formal education. Originally a Wesleyan Methodist who having studied the New Testament Church was drawn to the newly formed Quaker Methodists. During his ministry of over 50 years, he was to become the most significant voice of the new denomination during which he travelled some 30,000 miles and preached on over 6,000 occasions. All the more remarkable when you consider that railways only began being built in the latter part of his life.

The churches of the Connexion have been meeting together annually since their very first meeting in 1806. This followed a proposal, in as early as 1803, for a formal union of Independent Methodist Societies, the name Free Gospel Churches was often used at the beginning of the 19th century. There were many similar groups which emerged from the main Wesleyan Methodist Group. These included the Quaker Methodists of Warrington, the Camp Meeting Methodists of the Potteries, the Revivalists of Leeds, the Tent Methodists of Bristol, The Independent Methodists of Oldham, and the strangely titled Magic Methodists of Delamere Forest, Cheshire. Not all these groups became part of the Connexion, the Camp Meeting Methodists became the Primitive Methodists. A meeting was held in the following year also at Manchester, but it was only from the meeting of 1808 which was held in Macclesfield that written records exist.

For most of the history of Independent Methodism, Annual Meetings were hosted by individual churches where church delegates from around the Connexion were provided with overnight accommodation by church



members from the host church and other circuit churches. This arrangement resulted in the creating of long-lasting friendships between Independent Methodists from right across the Connexion.

In the 1970's it was decided for a various reason to start holding Annual Meetings at more centralised venues such as university halls of residence. This relieved the demands on churches and circuits of providing the manpower and accommodation to run Annual Meetings whilst at the same time providing a suitable environment for a more inclusive fellowship for all delegates and visitors. Beginning with the 1975 Annual Meeting which was held at Liverpool University there was a gradual transition to Annual Meetings being held at conference type accommodation with the last circuit-based event being held in 2001. From 2010 to 2019, Annual Meeting was held at The Hayes Christian Conference Centre at Swanwick in Derbyshire. (Photo Annual Meeting 2012 at Swanwick)

During the pandemic of 2020 and 2021, Annual Meeting was hosted on a 'Zoom' meeting, and it was decided that in 2022 a one-day meeting would be held at Nelson when Connexional Officers and delegates could attend in person or online. This formula was repeated for the 2023 meeting at New Silksworth.

Rob Brooks – Grappenhall IM

Next Time – Growth of the Denomination

In the Joy of the Lord

Pamela June Pollitt (nee Stansfield) was called home on the 4th of January 2024

On the fourth of February 1959 the Church Minutes book of Barnoldswick Independent Methodist Church records that PJ Stansfield was admitted into Church Membership. Further on the second of September 1979 there was a Recognition Service for a new minister at the Church. This was Pamela J Pollitt and yes, a change of name following her marriage to David. Pamela took on a wide range of roles within the church including being appointed President in December 1987 for 12 months. This included hosting (chairs) the critical special meeting in February 1988 to discuss the future of these magnificent buildings, a huge undertaking. She closed each meeting with a memorable Bible text including, *"Perfect love casts out fear"*. Which were unique to her Presidency.

Pamela faithfully served on many committees of which supporting Overseas Missions was a particular interest. She ensured money was raised over many years including memorable coffee mornings which have continued to be enjoyed by members and the wider community.

Sick visiting including buying and distributing gifts for Christmas, planning which preachers to invite, organising membership, being a representative in the local Independent Methodist Circuit in more recent times the role of Safeguarding Officer which entails a considerable workload and assisting with auditing were all carried out by

Pamela as was assisting the Treasurer David with numerous tasks.

Pamela was a regular attender at the Independent Methodist Annual Meetings and would always encourage others to go with her and ensure they were introduced and felt comfortable over the four days at many venues. She was part of organising the Connexional Meeting held at this church in 1971 which many still remember as the last time the church was full to the 750 capacity. Arranging the event include food and accommodation was a huge task.

Pamela had many Christian friends throughout the Independent Methodist Connexion and Annual Meeting was always a time to catch up. Jennifer recalls that Pamela always made an effort to find Hilda Rolfe, one of many who had a great influence on her and was also recently called home.

Pamela was a talented minister and preached on numerous occasions at Barnoldswick and throughout the connexion. There are many who will testify to this. Pamela's sincerity and sympathy ensured she was asked to carry out many funerals. Detailed preparation was always put in. She officiated at many Christenings at this church and even at home to accommodate family members.

The church expresses sincere sympathy to Pamela's family. They also offer thanks for supporting Pamela in her years of service to the church.

At our Carol Service on Christmas Eve Pamela joined us with members of her family. In conversation at the end, she said *"haven't we had a good time"* – positive words to remember a faithful servant of her Lord.

David Jefferies - Barnoldswick

Cathie Naunton of Easington Lane IM Church

It is we great sadness that we announce the passing of Cathie, she passed peacefully in hospital surrounded by her family on 8th February, aged 81 years.

After a long association with the church, Cathie became a member of the Church on 6th Aug 2000. She was a member of the WA and was always willing to take part in the services held on a Monday afternoon. Although she never held an official position in the church, she was always fully supportive of all the services and activities.

We will miss her sense of humour, but most of all we will miss the encouragement and support she gave to us all.

Her funeral service was well attended by her family and friends as well as her Church family and we pray it was a witness to her family, husband George, her 2 sons, daughters-in-law, and grandson, whom we continue to uphold in our prayers.

Till we meet again

Ian Grey – Easington Lane IM



Connexion
The magazine of the family of Independent Methodist Churches

The last day for articles to be submitted for the July / August issue of the Connexion magazine is 17th June. The theme for this issue will be 'Stillness'.

Please could all articles be sent either directly to the Resource Centre via post, or by email to magazine@imchurches.org.uk (please note the new email address).

Just a quick reminder that ideally all photographs need to be digital. Do ensure that safeguarding principles are followed by asking permission for the publication of any photographs and for the articles where people are named and/or can be identified.

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



Come Together to



service. This was a lovely time of fellowship. Finally, to everyone who came to share in this special evening, we pray that you were blessed.

A freewill offering was taken which resulted in £575 being handed to The Storehouse Project, a local Christian charity.

A wonderful, uplifting service on Easter Sunday morning was taken by our minister, Chris Ormerod. Eileen Melling and Eileen Smalley read the poems, 'What a Morning' by Ruth Burrows, which described the women arriving at the empty tomb, and 'The Unexpected Traveller', which focussed on the disciples' encounter with Jesus on the road to Emmaus. Jean Hilton read the account from John 20: 19-29 of Jesus appearing to His disciples.

Chris spoke of the impact of meeting and being with Jesus, and how our risen Lord meets us and is with us each day. Our choir's contribution to this service was the piece, 'Christ is Risen from the Dead.'

Looking back, this Easter was a real time of reflection, praise, fellowship and blessing.

Easter at Bethel, Newtown

*"Fools! For I also had my hour;
One far fierce hour and sweet:
There was a shout about my ears,
And palms before my feet."*
from 'The Donkey' by G.K. Chesterton

Our morning service on Good Friday was taken by Lester Atherton, whose focus was that although this is a sombre, reflective day, it is also a day to celebrate the love of God. To take part in the sacrament of Communion during the service was a time of reflection for each of us.

Our minister for Palm Sunday, March 24th, was David Moulson, who reminded us that this date is also the Jewish festival of Purim – a time when Jewish people celebrate the story of Esther, in a joyful, noisy way. He linked this with Christ's entry into Jerusalem, amid the large, excited crowds gathering to celebrate Passover. We were encouraged to visualise being part of this incredible scene. David spoke of God's providence, reminding us that, whatever the situation, whatever is happening, God is still there.

The theme of God's love continued in the evening when a large congregation gathered to hear the Easter Cantata, 'Cradle to Cross'. The augmented choir gave a moving performance of readings and music, following the story of Christ from his birth to His death and resurrection. The church was filled with over a hundred people, who felt drawn to come together, to share fellowship in this way on Good Friday.

Dorothy Kendrick, our Connexional President, who chaired the evening service, spoke again, in her address, of the theme of love.

Ann Rigby - Bethel Newtown



This was a truly wonderful time of praise and fellowship.

Initially, our thanks go to Kevan Booth, our organist and choirmaster, for compiling the music for the cantata and leading the choir, to each member of the choir and to Eileen Melling for her narration. We say a sincere 'thank you' to Dorothy Kendrick for not only coming to lead our service but bringing with her a group of friends from Oldham. We are grateful to all who organised and served refreshments at the end of the

Easter at Thatto Heath

In 2010 Dave Hill planted some Daffodil bulbs in what was then our Church Hall. On Easter Sunday of that year Dave was leading the Worship and near the end of the Service the fellowship walked over the road from the Church to the Church Hall, praying for the Community as we walked. We gathered around the cross, finished the message and sang a hymn and closed in prayer in the open air, in sight of and in earshot

Celebrate Easter



Easter at Risley

On Easter Sunday, 31st March, the Sunday School at Risley I.M. Church celebrated its annual prizegiving and all five of the regular attendees were given books in recognition of their regular attendance and as a 'thank you' for their great contribution to our church family. The two older children were given full editions of the Bible and, as you can see from the photo, all five were proudly showing their new books.

of the community we serve. We reflected upon the power of the cross buried but bursting into life, our Lord crucified yet rising from the grave in the garden. The

Left to right you can see Iris Kershaw, Paige Stafford, Yovela Poon, Noah Poon, and Cole Kershaw.



cross continues to come alive every year.

Sunday 7 April was a sad but happy day for the Fellowship at Thatto Heath. Margaret Marsh who came to worship with us in 2018 (following Prescot Gospel Hall closing) was moving to be nearer to her family in Nuneaton. Margaret's family worshipped at Prescot Gospel Hall since the war, she met her husband James there and they had 2 sons Paul and Clive who joined us for worship on that day. It was lovely to have Margaret share fellowship with us, we will miss her and we pray that God will bless her in her new home. Following a presentation carried out by Dot Williams we all joined in singing Margaret's favourite hymn 'It is a thing most wonderful'.

Fay Williams—Thatto Heath

The children were also very active in other parts of the Easter Morning service as they gave out Easter eggs to all the congregation during the offertory.

James Tobiaen - Risley

Easter at Stockton Heath

On Saturday 23rd March, the start of the school Easter Holidays, Stockton Heath Christian Fellowship were delighted to welcome 19 children plus their parents (and grandparents in some cases) along to our Easter Activity morning where they enjoyed crafts and games followed

by a short video of the Easter story after which we all sat down together to enjoy a lunch of hot dogs followed by cake. At the close of our time together each child was given an Easter egg and a book telling the Easter story. The Activity mornings are held on a regular basis during school holidays as we reach out to local families, and we pray this work will continue to grow through our contact with schools and families in the area.

Maundy Thursday evening we held a communion service which was a time of blessing to all who attended. On Good Friday we met with other local churches in the village for a short open-air service which also attracted a good number of onlookers.

Resurrection Sunday was a very special day as we met to share an Easter breakfast Before gathering together for an Easter Family Celebration service.

To round off the Easter activities we held a Supper and Quiz evening on Saturday 6th April when we enjoyed a delicious hotpot prepared by Dianne and Ruth before lots of fun, laughter, and fellowship together in the quiz organised by Dave Duckworth. A great evening enjoyed by all.

Barbara Hodgkinson – Stockton Heath Christian Fellowship



Penny's visit for Bunnies' £385

Penny Squirrel paid a visit to Little Stars, the Toddlers' weekly meeting at Mount Zion Church, Cliviger.

The mascot from Pendleside Hospice was there to help Leah Hooper, community engagement officer, receive a cheque for £385.61 from Janet Kershaw and Julie Williams, the toddlers' group leaders. The money was raised at the children's recent Bunny Hop.



Caption: Penny Squirrel and Leah Hooper receive the cheque from Janet Kershaw and Julie Williams with some of the children at the weekly meeting.

"Thirty three children took part in the Bunny Hop to raise the money in aid of the hospice which does such valuable work in our community," said Janet. The children all pretended to be sleeping bunnies before being led in the Bunny Hop by the White Rabbit (one of our

grandmothers dressed up)," she added, "We were delighted to be able to raise a good amount of money to help the hospice,"

A delighted Leah pointed out: "It was a great pleasure to receive the

cheque from such an active group wanting to help our work in supporting people 17 years and older with life-threatening illnesses.

Dave Hall - Cliviger



Liz Greenhalgh had an unfortunate accident early in March, as she damaged her ankle while joining in a game of football with the after-school children. This took a longer time to heal than she had expected, so she had to sit around a lot during the youth club and the after-school club meetings for a while, very frustrating for her. However, she experienced the Lord's provision through other people and also felt blessed as she was able to rest in the presence of the Lord in a deeper way. An added bonus was the possibility of giving one-on-one help to a boy and a girl in the after-school programme who were really struggling. Meanwhile, 24 of the young people are taking part in the Youth Alpha course and are drawing closer to the Lord. Plans are being made for their summer camp. Liz has missed the first of the resumed visits to the women's prison because of her accident, but continues her correspondence with Lucia, the lady she met previously, though she is now in another prison.

Daniel and Gail Castro had an unexpectedly eventful end to last year, Daniel's father was called home to be with the Lord on Christmas Day. He had been ill for some weeks but had seemed to be improving. Daniel managed to get back to Colombia for the funeral on December 27th. Despite the circumstances it was good for Daniel to see so many members of his family over New Year and to be able to preach in his home church. In recent months they have become involved with a Discipleship Explored course which has been very encouraging and consequently they hope to see more disciple-making initiatives within the church. Recently a few Spanish-speaking people have come to some church-based activities and, of course, both Daniel and Gail have been able to converse with them and help them. Another aspect of their ministry is serving with their mission organisation OMS by providing member care for overseas missionaries and those at home. They ask for prayer regarding a possible mission's trip to Ecuador later in the year.

L. and P. thank us for praying for them over the somewhat hectic time of the last few months and also for their friends, Alan and

Katie as they settle down in their new life together. The conference in the capital city with their supporting organisation went well and was a great encouragement. There was also a meeting there concerning P.'s project and good principles were established for future collaboration. Pray that this particular project will transform the lives of the women beneficiaries on every level, including spiritually. L. has been able to continue her coaching and mentoring work online. At the time of writing, they were planning to visit the believers in their previous country of ministry. They have been facing much opposition and need prayer and encouragement. The approximate dates of their home visit in July are:

11th-13th Northeast
17th-19th Northwest.

They would appreciate accommodation during their stay in the various locations where possible.

Finally, an Overseas Missions meeting will be held at Northwood on Saturday, July 13th at 2pm. Do come if you can!

Anne Fambely



Sometimes, during the long winter months, it is good to meet together for fellowship in a social manner rather than the formal Sunday services. So, on Saturday February 10th the church members at Mill Lane in Bristol held a bring and share evening. There was good food for all to share and the evening entertainment took the form of a Beetle Drive. Everyone had a good time in fellowship with each other.

Celebrate Each Other

David Chapple—Mill Lane, Bristol

Our secretary of 24 years Susan Pickles has officially stepped down from the role as of yesterday.

Thank you!

Susan has served our church magnificently over the years.

Following our morning service she was presented with a gift and flowers by our minister Judith Diggins.

Diane Hodkinson—Nelson



Grappenhall Independent Methodist Church
1970 -2020



A Further History – A Personal Recollection
Rob Brooks

Grappenhall Independent Methodist Church History 1970 – 2020

A personal history of the Church from 1970 to 2020 and a little beyond. Recalling how the church, the building and the people have developed and changed over half a century and of its sometimes difficult relationship with the Connexion of Independent Methodist Churches.

The one-hundred-page book is on sale at £5 per copy and is available by contacting the Church at 'Grappenhallimc@outlook.com'. All profits will go to the Church funds.



All are invited to the

OVERSEAS MISSIONS SUMMER EVENT

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

WHERE:

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

WHEN:

Saturday 13th July at 2pm

CONTACT:

Carrie O'Nions
om.organiser@imchurches.org.uk

It would be great to see you there!





Act on poverty this Christian Aid Week

This Christian Aid Week, as a UK General Election approaches, the people hoping to represent you in the next UK Parliament will be vying for your vote. They'll be in listening mode, keen to hear what makes the voters in their community tick.

Just as Aline rose to become a leader of her community and pushed back against poverty, you can too. Tell your candidates about Aline's inspiring story, show them that your church cares about poverty, and tell them that you expect them to act on poverty too, if they are elected.

Aline's story

Pushed to the brink of survival

Poverty pushed Aline to the brink of survival. She was abused, homeless and hungry. But Aline pushed back harder.

Driven by hope, faith and the love of her children, Aline was able to fight against the inhumanity of poverty and build herself a new life

A few years later, Aline faced even more devastation. Her husband married another woman, forcing Aline to flee. He prevented her from taking their children with her, and in a further act of cruelty, told the local community that Aline was mentally ill and unable to care for her children.

“ I wandered the streets, asking anyone for a place to sleep. Those who showed me kindness would let me stay for two or three days, but it was difficult. People would insult me and treat me with contempt. They forgot I was a human being. It filled me with sorrow. ”
 - Aline Nibogora.

Life in Burundi

In Burundi, malnourishment and poverty affect more than 70% of the population, making survival a daily struggle. Jobs and food are hard to come by, and those who have homes often have no electricity or running water.

For Aline, life was a constant struggle. She was married young and gave birth to her eldest son, Fisto, when she was just 14 years old. Aline experienced constant abuse at the hands of her violent husband.

How Christian Aid stepped in

Hungry, scorned and alone, Aline took her first step towards her new life. She started by participating in a transformative three-day community workshop, funded by Christian Aid.

‘I came out with amazing knowledge and skills. The trainer restored a sense of hope and energy in me,’ says Aline.

She was taught how to form a Village Savings and Loans

Building a business

With a small start-up loan, Aline started trading avocados and peanuts locally. With her profits, she bought a bicycle so she could transport greater quantities of goods to markets further afield. Eventually, her hard work had finally paid off, and she had earned the money she needed to rent a house.

Once Aline secured a home for herself, her three eldest sons were able to escape their father and join

her. They told Aline that their father had abused them and sent their three young siblings to live with different members of his family.

Aline still hopes that she'll be reunited with her youngest children in time.

Today, Aline lives peacefully on her own plot of land in a remote village in the Kayogoro Commune in Makamba Province. She's baked her own bricks and is building a strong home for her and her children in every sense.

Now Aline can afford food, clothes and essential healthcare for her family. She's also purchased solar panels so her children can do their evening homework by electric light.

‘I like to feed my family with the produce that I grow, such as beans, vegetables and corn. I am so happy that we are together. Now my children feel supported as they have a parent who can meet their needs.’

- Aline.

Recovery and resilience

Of course, Burundi continues to be one of the toughest places on earth to live. The future is uncertain and challenges wait for families like Aline's around every corner.

When a ferocious storm destroyed Aline's home, almost killing her and her children, she was able to recover by selling the cows she'd been keeping. Now when crisis

‘When we see Christian Aid, we feel comforted; we feel we are not alone. You helped us to change our poor living conditions. I really thank you from the very bottom of my heart.’

- Aline.

threatens her family's survival, Aline has options.

Even a small business can provide just enough resilience to weather the most brutal of storms here in Burundi.

Aline can not only look ahead to her children's future now, but her own too. Naturally, Aline wants security as she ages.

In the next five years she hopes to expand her current wholesale business by selling a range of goods, so that one day she can

buy a mill. This will provide a source of income without the need to transport heavy goods over long distances.

Aline told us: ‘This is not a dream. It is a plan, and I will do it. I am a woman who is an achiever.’



The difference with Christian Aid Aline's long and difficult journey out of extreme poverty began with a little support, knowledge and faith from Christian Aid supporters like you.

No one should have to live on the brink of survival. During Christian Aid Week 2023, you raised £5 million to help transform lives just like Aline's.

This year, you can help us support even more people living in poverty. With 7 days and so many ways to raise funds for our Christian Aid Week appeal, what will you pick? Bake, run, swim, walk - we can't wait to see what a difference our supporters can make!

Geoffrey S Matthews

Christian Aid Representative

Independent Methodist Churches

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Christian Aid Week 2024

Aline's story

How Christian Aid helped Aline transform her life and climb out of extreme poverty.



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Saturday 6th April marked the Golden Wedding of Gill and Rob Brooks with an afternoon celebration held in the church hall. The couple first met through activities organised by the Young People's Committee of the Warrington IM Circuit in 1971 and were married at Grappenhall on the 6th April 1974, the day that ABBA won the Eurovision Song Contest with 'Waterloo'. They watched it that night and have continued to watch Eurovision every year since!

Throughout their fifty years of marriage, they have been committed to all aspects of the work at Grappenhall, first through the church's Youth and Sunday School work to today where they now focus on Church Leadership and Ministry. Gill who is a graduate of the Royal



Northern College of Music was for many years the Musical Accompanist for worship and Choir Leader.

To mark the occasion family and friends were invited to the celebration which included a short concert performed by sisters Nikki and Pipa Clark, both professional musicians on keyboard and violin. Gill

had taught them both piano some forty years ago when they were school-girls. After worship on the following day, the congregation were invited to continue the celebration in the hall and enjoy a slice of cake.

Rob Brooks – Grappenhall

Food for Thought

Roman Road recently held one of their regular Food for Thought events on Saturday 17th February. As a change from the usual format which is an evening event with a speaker and a supper, we changed to an afternoon event with an afternoon tea, and our speaker was our own minister, Derek Barron.

Derek is the Free Church chaplain at HMP Manchester (Strangeways) and spoke about the chaplaincy work at the prison.



Before Derek spoke we enjoyed a delicious afternoon tea with sandwiches and savouries followed by home-made scones and an assortment of cakes.

Derek had allocated a space at the back of the hall which showed the size of a cell. Cells at Manchester are single occupancy with the odd exception. He then gave a list of items and we had to decide whether prisoners had these in their cells. He outlined the average day of the chaplaincy team. There are currently 9

chaplains working at the prison covering all major religions including paganism. The team work together well despite their different beliefs as they are all working with the common goal to support the prisoners and guards. A sheet of True or False statements prompted discussion and some surprises.

Everyone enjoyed a challenging and thought provoking afternoon.

Elizabeth Barron — Roman Road

