

Donations

February 2026

**GREETINGS
FROM
LUDLOW
METHODIST
CHURCH**



The altar of Truro Cathedral

SOWING SEEDS OF HOPE



I need some vegetables for supper but all I have is an orange in the fruit bowl. Good, it's Wednesday so I can go up to the market to stock up with fruit and veg. Meanwhile in the lush mountains of Alta Verapaz, Guatemala (as in countless other nations in the Global South) people like Sophia are losing all their carefully tended crops through severe drought.

It's been raining here all morning and I've overheard many grumbles about the weather. Sophia's problems are rather more serious. As she told a Christian Aid worker, "One day my neighbour was clearing his land. He set it on fire, which spread destroying my plantation". She described her reaction as a 'huge pain in my chest' with the realisation that she had nothing left to provide for her family. "You plant something, you take care of it and then suddenly it's all gone".



Sophia

Sophia is one of the millions at the coalface of the climate crisis. Like thousands of other farming women, she's constantly battling crop failure which can lead, devastatingly, to hunger and malnutrition.

Sophia's eyes light up with joy, as she says to the Christian Aid worker, "I feel very thankful that you are my visitors - it



Learning to make chocolate

motivates and supports me. My reality is very hard. But now I feel more encouraged to face life".

Through Christian Aid's local partner, Congcoop, Sophia has access to tools and training enabling her to build rainwater collection systems, cultivate native seeds and grow nutritious crops that are more resilient to extreme weather. She has also attended chocolate-making workshops. Following the example of her neighbours she sells her products at the local markets to earn income to support her family.

Sophia recognises her good fortune in being part of this community. She is full of hope, dreaming of extending the crops she grows to include cacao, cinnamon and pepper. Her story is one of resistance and resilience. With the right tools, knowledge she is reclaiming her life, her land and her livelihood. She is sowing seeds of hope for her children and grandchildren's futures

We are privileged to be able to play our part in this work in 2026. A Happy New Year and thanks for your amazing support.

Claire Wilcox

Early Moon

Though the world is slowly waking
and the hour has outrun dawn

The calm of night has lingered
in the early morn

Before the worries of the day
conspire to cloud God's harmony

Give thanks for sun and sky and field your,
place in nature's tapestry

Mist stands white across the
dell and rosehips blaze in morning sun

Shadows spring from fence and gate
their daily journey just begun

And we who watch see beauty's touch
and gaze in awed humility

A peace, a time of rest is found
embedded in this mystery

Past tree and meadow flows the brook
and blackbird's song has graced the air

Hedges gleam with burnished
leaves our hearts provoked to grateful prayer

So thank the Lord for marsh and fen
for rill and stream and all that's fair.

Pip Hollins

REBUILDING AFTER CONFLICT

It's New Year's Eve and, having enjoyed a splendid Christmas Day meal, I am now looking forward to a similarly celebratory meal this evening.

Imagine, if you can (but how can we?), as you are relaxing following a good meal, you hear gunshots outside the front door. Men armed with Kalashnikovs and grenade launches are storming the village. An explosion rocks the house. The children are terrified and start to cry. 'When I heard the shouting I thought we are dead', says Michel who lives in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in Central Africa. He, his grandchildren, and his neighbours are all caught up in a brutal conflict, the third he has known in his 79 years.

He goes on, 'We had no choice but to run. We locked all the doors and fled with the children'. Millions like Michel have repeatedly been compelled to uproot from their homes. They are trapped in one of the world's largest humanitarian crises. Michel and his traumatised grandchildren left everything behind and sought refuge in another village.

After hearing that the rebels had gone, they returned home to be confronted by complete devastation: homes trashed, savings looted and livestock stolen. Michel found that four of their goats had been stolen, leaving only one and one kid. The livestock had been given to the villagers by Christian Aid's local partner, ECCMERU, a Congolese church programme which supports refugees and humanitarian emergencies.



Michel and his wife with a Christian Aid worker, Joseph

Before the emergency evacuation Michel had distributed goats and rabbits to 25 neighbours as part of a community-led project to maintain older people's dignity through cash grants, clean water and resilience plans. Despite working every daylight hour to provide food for his family Michel comments that 'We hardly eat. We have nothing to feed the children except the vegetables and bean leaves we pick'.

The emergency aid that Christian Aid delivers with its local partners aims to protect children from the pain of hunger and malnutrition. Our prayers must be for those who are hungry, for Christian Aid who seek to alleviate their suffering and for us as we seek to support Christian Aid through our collections.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Claire



Lent Lunch

St Laurence's Church
Fridays 13 & 20 March
12noon - 1.30pm

christian aid
We believe in life before death

By holding a Lent Lunch for Christian Aid you'll be raising money for vulnerable people like Michael across the world.

Street Banquet, Church at the Margins Birmingham Methodist District

(now called West Midlands District and that includes us!)

“People often find a hidden conscience to help the homeless around Christmastime,” according to Neil Johnson Pioneer Minister of Street Banquet, a Church at the Margins initiative, of the Birmingham Methodist District. However, when the trimmings are packed away and the turkey is a distant memory there are still people who find themselves hungry, without a home and with long winter nights stretching ahead of them.

But for members of the street community in Birmingham there is hope; around a hundred homeless guests are treated to a “proper sit-down meal” once a month, by Street Banquet, which Rev Neil says “is a joy and a privilege to be part of”. The act of table fellowship, he adds, is incredibly powerful; “meeting a very human need of feeding our bodies and souls”. He explains that Street Banquet was founded on the parable of the Great Feast, Luke 14, “with the challenge to build a new community which is inclusive, empowering and committed to addressing social issues, especially homelessness”.

This homeless church has no regular base and as such it has much in common with sofa-surfers, going anywhere it is welcome and moving on regularly so as not to outstay its welcome. Currently Street Banquet rotates between three venues: an Anglican church; the Salvation Army Citadel and a Unitarian Church.

Guests are supported by volunteer hosts, a cross-section of people, many of whom have themselves some lived experience either of homelessness, marginalisation or exclusion. The hosts are made up of three groups: the kitchen; learning; and caring teams. These teams operate in a similar way to a church council, making decisions ranging from bible readings and training courses to menu content. The bite sized courses include, among many other things, food hygiene, de-escalation skills, bible study and, of course, alongside this pastoral care is always provided.

Hosts receive support too, they are invited to weekly bible classes, can undergo a variety of training courses and take part in quarterly celebrations. One host has even been spurred on to take additional college courses to further his own skills.

Supplied by Elizabeth Wright

GARDEN ALLIES

Our gardens are coming to life, birds are nesting and early bees are searching for nectar. Before we know it will be time for putting out new plants which can be very tempting for garden pests, but hold off on the chemical warfare! There are plenty of garden inhabitants that can help us to keep these pests under control.

No need for insecticide sprays and poisonous pellets. Here are some garden friends who can do the job naturally.

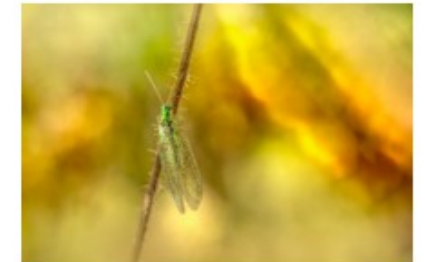


Ladybirds and their larvae eat aphids, (green and black fly), and red spider mites. Each ladybird larva will eat up to 5000 aphids. Attract these allies by planting yarrow, alyssum, penstemon, fennel, cinquefoil and tansy.

Parasitic Wasps don't sting, and lay their eggs on other insects. The larva then eats the host. They prey on a variety of insects including

caterpillars, sawfly and aphids.

Lacewings are insects with long, transparent wings. Their larvae are voracious aphid eaters. Lacewings like yarrow, dill, angelica, coriander, cosmos, fennel and dandelion.



Ground beetles are voracious predators. They like slugs and snails. Like all beetles they like places to hide during the day, like leaf litter, log piles or large stones.

Hoverflies are harmless insects, which don't sting, feed on nectar and pollen, and are useful pollinators, but their larvae also eat aphids. Nectar-rich plants for the adults like alyssum, marjoram, mallow, poached egg plant, marigold, dill, California poppy (*Eschscholzia*).

Soldier Beetles like to eat aphids and caterpillars. Plant golden rod, catnip, hydrangeas, tansy.

Hedgehogs are great slug eaters. They have suffered from the use of slug pellets in gardens as they too are poisoned as a result. If you want a hedgehog in your garden, don't use them, and make sure that if your garden is fenced there are some places where a hedgehog can get in and out.



Bees - Bumble bees, honey bees and all the 200 plus species of solitary bee pollinate plants. Bumble bees and solitary bees will happily live in gardens if they have the right conditions. Some live in holes in the soil or lawn or look for

small holes to make a nest. Bees like nectar and pollen rich flowers like lavender, marjoram, geranium, foxglove, poppy, rosemary, viburnum. They can also be attracted by putting up a "bee hotel" in the garden.

Small Birds, especially great tits and blue tits consume a huge number of caterpillars in the nesting season. A brood of great tits for instance will devour up to 10,000 caterpillars before they fledge! (BTO statistic). Help attract these birds into your garden by feeding with seeds and nuts through the winter, putting up nest boxes in safe places, and allowing caterpillars food plants such as nettles and hawthorn.

Thrushes like to eat snails. They will choose a place in the garden as an "anvil" to break the snail's shell to get at the soft creature inside. Thrushes nest in tall older trees but will visit gardens if there is enough for them to eat and cover for them to hide. Thrushes have also suffered from the use of slug and snail poisons used in gardens, and are now not as numerous as they once were.

Happy natural gardening!

Supplied by Elizabeth Wright

20th Anniversary Celebration

For those of us who were around at the time, it doesn't seem like 20 years since the church refurbishment project was completed, the church re-dedicated and Wesley's opened. But it is – and we are going to celebrate the milestone for a whole week, 10th to 17th May.

Ideas so far are displays of 'before and after' photographs and information on the project(s), variations on exhibitions 'Look What We Made' (banners etc), 'Look What We Do' (testimonials from hirers, Wesley's customers etc), Look Who We Are (our mission, our members etc), floral displays, church guided tours round the building ..., our ambitions.

One suggestion was to put Wesley's prices back to 2006 levels!

So far there is a small planning committee – Rev Denise, Janet Williams, Stephen Dalton, Edith Blair and me, Joyce Evans – but we really need this to be a whole church celebration. We are very keen to hear further suggestions to add to the list or offers of mementoes, materials, events. Please put your thinking caps on, no suggestion is too small, too big or too whacky.

Put the dates in the diary, pray about it too.

Contact any of the committee members with your thoughts and offers. Thank you!

Green Pages

A round-up of environmental
and climate-change news

February 2026

Aiming for Net Zero

Five practical ideas for 2026 to reduce our Carbon Footprint:

1. Rethink food choices

So try swapping one or two meat-heavy meals for plant-based alternatives each week, and buy seasonal, locally-grown produce, to reduce transportation emissions and support the local economy.

2. Reduce energy consumption at home

Switching to LED bulbs, unplugging devices when not in use and adjusting your thermostat by just a couple of degrees can significantly cut your energy use – but don't forget to get the blanket out!

3. Rethink transportation

Could you walk, cycle, or take public transport for some of your regular journeys? Or share transport wherever possible. When buying a new vehicle, electric or hybrid options could make a massive difference.

4. Embrace mindful consumption

Before buying something new, ask yourself if you really need it. Perhaps borrow, rent, or buy second-hand instead? Why not take a look around charity shops. Choose quality items that last longer, repair what you have and support companies with genuine sustainability commitments, all help reduce environmental impact.

5. Reduce water waste

Shorter showers, fixing leaky taps and turning off the tap while brushing your teeth, are simple changes that conserve water. If you have outdoor space, collect rainwater for plants. Full loads in a washing machine or dishwasher are more efficient than multiple partial loads.

Methodist Church in Britain

Water: a gift we forget

Do we reverence water? We do not. The amount of water in the world is constant, but it is unevenly distributed and therefore differentially valued. We turn on the tap, and if the water does not come out, we bitterly complain about the water company.

We expend billions of pounds purifying water that we have sullied by our excess use of chemicals, which we flush down the drain, and by run-off of agricultural fertilisers. In much of Africa water is still collected in containers and carried significant distances on the heads of women and girls – this use of time is a key reason why women receive less education; moreover, they can be easily abused on their long lonely walks.

In this country shortages of water are usually no more than a short-term inconvenience, but the lack of water in other countries causes death and untold suffering. Disputes over water supplies can also be the cause of wars.

In January we recalled Jesus' baptism by water. To receive our Christian names we were baptised with water, remembering Christ's baptism; water is a holy resource.

So what can we do? Let's use the water we do have wisely. We can install water meters; this may reduce our enthusiasm for hosepipes or leaving taps running. Water butts at home can collect rainwater from roofs to be used in the garden later.

We can support charities like Water Aid, and those that plant trees whose transpiration increases rainfall. We should also support international efforts to reduce global heating; if the atmosphere is warmer it holds more of our precious water in suspension and then suddenly releases it in often damaging downpours.

Britain is the 'green and pleasant land' it is because it is wet; we shall never die of thirst. Water simply falls from the heavens; let us thank God for it!

*Adapted from an article written for the **Methodist Recorder**
by John D Anderson.*

Planting trees to protect the rainforest

On the surface, the ancestral rainforest territory of the Wampis people of Peru bears little resemblance to the English county of Herefordshire. Yet the areas are linked, thanks to the efforts of a group of Herefordshire residents who raised £110,000 to protect a patch of the Amazon that is about the size of their county.

Local farmers, Sue and Jeremy Bugler, set up 'The Size of Herefordshire' campaign in 2015, out of a desire to protect one of the most bio-diverse areas on the planet, while raising awareness of deforestation and the climate crisis. They were inspired by 'The Size of Wales', an environmental charity founded as an antidote to repeated media use of "the size of Wales" as a unit to measure the destruction of natural habitats. Herefordshire is only 220,000 hectares, around a tenth the size of Wales, so it was manageable.

The couple approached the Forest Peoples Programme (FPP), an NGO that works with Indigenous groups around the world. FPP told them that £110,000 would enable the charity to help protect a substantial area of Amazonian rainforest belonging to the Wampis people living in north-eastern Peru, near the border with Ecuador.

A map of Herefordshire was divided into squares of 10 hectares each. Locals were invited to sponsor a square for £5. Locals could also sponsor a tree-planting project, by paying for one of 900 new trees in a 3 acre patch on their farm. The idea was to "plant here and protect there".

The money raised helped the Wampis people to secure legal recognition of their 1.4m hectares of pristine rainforest. This has enabled them to take legal action against gold miners and oil prospectors exploiting their land, including the state oil company, forcing the companies to clean up and pay compensation.

In 2016, a man from the Wampis people came to Herefordshire. He visited four great European cities: Paris, Amsterdam, London and Hereford! When asked if the money raised would protect the rainforest forever, he was honest in his reply, saying that he couldn't give that assurance, because it depends on so many factors, including whether future generations will be as committed.

Jo Caird, Positive News

A moral dilemma

Elizabeth has submitted an article about tax avoidance practiced by the e-commerce and technology company Amazon (*not to be confused with the Amazon rainforest in the previous article!*), suggesting that we should boycott Amazon until it pays its fair share of corporation tax.

Living in a rural community, Mike cannot always find what he needs to buy locally, particularly electronic and specialist equipment. He always prefers to shop local wherever he can, but this is not always possible. So there is a dilemma.

Amazon had a good year in the UK, with income up by around 13%. Profit margins have also been rising. Comparing its latest average global profit margin to declared UK income, it is estimated that its UK profits could have been an eye-watering £2.9 billion in 2024. As Amazon does not disclose the amount of corporation tax actually paid in the UK, it is estimated that the loss to the exchequer could be as big as £575 million.

The UK government needs revenue to rebuild public services such as the NHS and schools. Tax from corporations like Amazon is an important form of income for our government. Amazon talks publicly about how much it is contributing to the UK economy, but this is often at the expense of replacing retailers who were paying tax. You can't drive down a motorway without seeing another giant Amazon fulfilment centre popping up somewhere; for each of these new warehouses it is claimed that 100 shops will have closed down somewhere else – possibly on a high street near you.

Perhaps the answer is to encourage the government to close the tax loopholes exploited by the likes of Amazon so that these companies pay taxes in the same way as other businesses. **And, as a consumer, shop locally whenever you can!**

Source: Ethical Consumer

*The Green Pages of the Ludlow Methodist Church monthly magazine are brought to you by the Care for Creation Group.
For more information please contact Elizabeth Wright.*

House Groups are GO!

19th January at 2.30pm
at the home of Sara & Paul
Burnham
(Orleton & Wyson)

28th January at 3.00pm
at the home of Ruth and Mike
Owens
(Ludlow)

2nd February at 2.30pm
at the home of Jo and Nigel
Gibbon
(Hopton Bank & Melville)

**Led by Rev. Denise
Hargreaves,**
Looking at the Gospel of
Matthew

Letter from St James the Least of All

On the art of drinking well

The Rectory
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren

You closed your last letter with the remark that it was time to retire to bed with a cup of cocoa. That may be all very well for the pious intensity of a theological college - although a stiff whisky was always acceptable in my day - but it is not a style to continue once in the parish. I do feel obliged to give you a few hints about what should and should not be drunk in public as a parish priest.

Morning visits are to be discouraged, but if one is unavoidable, and you are invited to have a drink, then it has to be coffee. It is the only time of day when a mug is acceptable - provided, of course, that it is bone china or porcelain. In the afternoons one changes to tea, but only from cups. Blended varieties may be all very well for Curates in their first year, but it should be Darjeeling for an incumbent. And fruit teas are for Quakers only.

If an inappropriate vessel is offered, then the drink should be accepted, but left untouched. Since the visit will be discussed in the finest detail throughout the parish the moment you have left, your host will soon learn why and not make the same error a second time. It is for the same reason that if you ever want to circulate a piece of news round the parish as quickly as possible, never put it in the parish magazine, just mention it casually during one of your visits. Everyone will know by teatime.

Alcoholic drinks must be carefully judged. A sherry - dry, naturally - is probably best if you are invited to lunch. In the early evening, a gin and tonic would be the drink of choice. To ask for whisky would indicate that you are about to go over to Rome, and a mineral water that you have your roots in non-conformity. Beer is never, ever drunk in someone's house unless you suffer from some personal tragedy, such as being the diocesan youth chaplain.

However, an occasional beer in the pub with the bell-ringers (who will be real ale fanatics to a man) or after choir practice - which

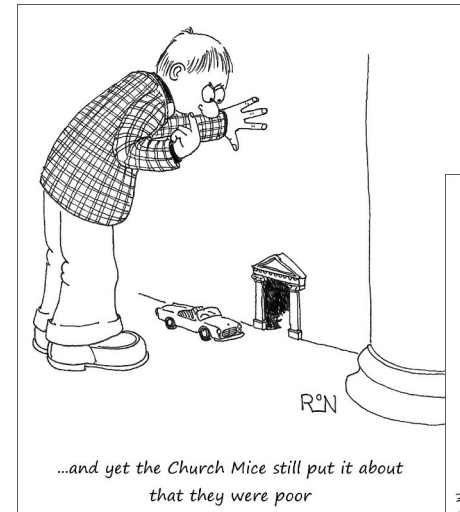


seems to be the real purpose of holding practices anyway - or as a treat for the sacristan, will show you are a man of the people. It is some years since I visited the pub.

Understanding wine should be taught at every theological college as an essential part of the ministry. Develop a taste for claret, dear boy, and you will be starting your journey towards high office.

And perhaps you should give that tin of cocoa to the verger.

Your loving uncle,
Eustace



A big thank you.... to all those, week by week, who add to the beauty of our church through the flowers they provide and arrange.

Maureen Farmery compiles the calender and I am sure she would be happy to hear from anyone who would like to join the rota.

The flowers that remain in church are often appreciated by those who use the chapel through the week, but if you know someone who would like a visit and some flowers then that is sometimes more appropriate.

There is paper and cards in the vestry in the unit behind the door. The card speaks of a gift of love from the church, and that is what the flowers signify.

And did you know that while there are lots of different vases in the toilet off Wesleys, there are dishes in the 'trunk' outside, behind the Garden Room, and usually some greenery in a bucket you are welcome to use.

Adrian

When you pray...

Words and wisdom of Jesus –
He doesn't say, if or in case,
He says, when... you pray.
And we will.

From deep within,
Our spirit calls out to God,
Created to communicate with the Creator.
Cinemas can ban, statistics can suggest we won't,
But Jesus says, when you pray...

Say, Our Father,
And when we do, He hears and answers
And pours out His love,
Always.

By Daphne Kitching

From the Vicar

'I can resist everything but temptation' (Oscar Wilde). During Lent we remember Jesus' experience in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11), when *'He was led by the Spirit to be tempted by the devil.'* (1). Temptation is a test of whether we do things our way or God's way. After 40 days of fasting Jesus was tired, hungry and vulnerable. Like Him, the Devil will attack us at our most vulnerable moments, especially when we are stressed.

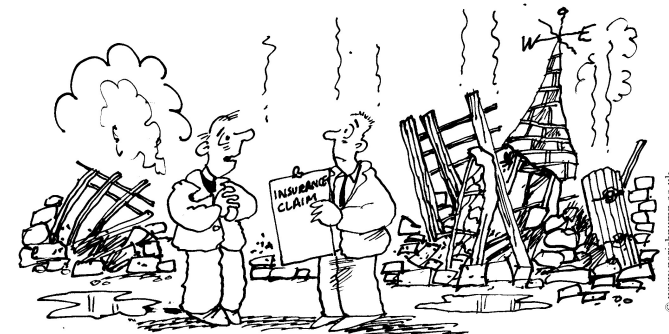
The first temptation was to turn stones into bread: Jesus' ministry was not about putting His own needs first. *'We do not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God'* (Deuteronomy 8:3). Like Jesus, we need to make God our priority and trust Him completely.

The second temptation was to put God to the test: Jumping off the Temple pinnacle would have been a dramatic way for Jesus to gain popularity, but this was not God's way! *'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'* (Deuteronomy 6:16). We too need to learn this lesson!

The third temptation was to worship Satan: The devil took Jesus up a mountain to offer Him worldly power. In contrast, His calling as Messiah was to be marked by suffering and honouring God. *'Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only'* (Deuteronomy 6:13). This is to be our experience of living for God.

Jesus stands with us in our temptations. As we claim the promises of Scripture, like Him, we will find strength in the Spirit's power and the victory of the cross.

'If you look at the world, you'll be distressed. If you look within, you'll be depressed. But if you look at Christ, you'll be at rest!'
(Corrie Ten Boom).



...er... apart from this little hiccup... it was an excellent church pancake supper..

Leaders of the Ukrainian church appeal for peace

As the fourth anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine approaches, Ukrainian church leaders have appealed for just measures to be put in place so that the invasion will end.

The country's Greek Catholic Primate, Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk, said: "Let the modern creators of history protect human life from modern-day Herods - and let us pray that those who make fateful decisions will be inspired by the Holy Spirit not to start wars, but to stop them."

The Primate of the Ukrainian independent Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Epiphany (Dumenko), also compared Russia's rulers to King Herod, who had used "ostentatious, external religiosity" to conceal a "rejection of God's truth".

He went on to say that divine retribution was "inevitable" for those who continued to abduct Ukrainian children and rape Ukrainian women, and for Patriarch Kirill, who had "blessed war, crimes, and murders" from the pulpit.

Smile

It hurts...

A little girl told her mother one day before lunch that her stomach was hurting. Her mother replied: "That's because it's empty, you have to put something into it!"

That evening the minister and his wife came for dinner. The minister looked a bit rough and explained that his head was hurting him. The little girl gave him a sweet smile and said encouragingly: "That's because it's empty, you have to put something into it!"

Hymns for Professionals

Dentist – Crown Him with many crowns

Contractors – The Church's one foundation

Obstetricians – Come labour on

Golfers – There is a green hill far away

Politicians – Standing on the promises

Librarians – Let all mortal flesh keep silent

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