

50p

July 2023

GREETINGS FROM LUDLOW METHODIST CHURCH



General Church Meeting Report for Ludlow and Blackford Cluster

A full set of minutes is on the noticeboard at the back of the church. Please let Church Secretary, Joyce Evans, know if you would like a copy.

Held on 20th April, there were 23 attendees with 17 apologies. The previous year's minutes were approved with no matters arising.

Cluster Council Appointment.

Susan McGarvey was elected to the Cluster Council which brings the membership up to 27.

Finance

David Harlington was able to report a surplus of £5,000 for the year 2021-2022, a very good result after difficult years of post Covid deficits. Close control needs to be maintained, a balanced budget has been set for 2022-23. So far income has matched expectations but high inflation has affected a large part of our expenditure. The Cluster Council will continue to monitor the situation. David thanked the Property and Finance Committee for their support and he was also thanked for his hard work.

Charitable Giving

Ten nominations had been made for organisations to benefit from our annual charitable giving. Attendees agreed a voting system which resulted in £1,500 being approved for 1) Ludlow Food Bank, 2) The Jubilee Campaign, 3) Mission Aviation Fellowship and 4) River Action.

Minister's Report – this has already appeared in a previous magazine. Kim reported a year of consolidation and recovery post Covid with regular activities reinstated. A highlight for the year is that we will welcome Rev Denise Hargreaves and her husband, Maurice, in September. It is sad to see Edith Blair's retirement from managing Wesley's, her years of cheerful and faithful service have been so appreciated. Membership stands at 98. We are sad at the loss of some much loved members while welcoming new faces.

Front cover: East Coast main line and the Angel of the North

Blackford has held four services. Caynham chapel has now been sold. In his last annual report Kim expressed huge gratitude for all the kindness and care shown to all the family and his thanks for the privilege of being able to serve here. In difficult times for the church as a whole, he has every confidence in the resilience of the faithfulness and love shown by our members as we seek to continue to worship God and serve our community.

The church recorded our thanks for this report and thanked Kim for his service and his company over the years he has been here.

Conversation on the Work of God

The meeting heard a report on the recent Circuit Forum (already reported in the magazine) which had gone well, with 17 Ludlow members joining around 50 others from around the Circuit on Zoom. David Harlington said this had encouraged the Circuit Leadership team. The GCM meeting broke into groups to share 'What strengths do we hold as precious and timeless that we should build on as a circuit for the future'.

These are some responses:

- Our welcome – we must ensure that care continues and evolves for new people and 'old' ones.
- Our ordinariness – no airs and graces, no frills or dogmas.
- The breadth of preaching.
- That we have licence, freedom to think.
- That we are in a community, we are connected to each other.
- That we are inclusive.
- We celebrate the ministry of all believers, all have responsibility and opportunity to serve.

We will continue to build on these strengths and carry on with conversations and thought about how we can best serve God as a Church and Circuit going forward.

The meeting closed as we shared the Grace.

Quotes:

Prayer is the original wireless communication. – *Anon*

God enters by a private door into every individual. – *Anon*

Beauty is the gift of God. – *Aristotle*

HMS Fearless and the Secretary of State for Defence

1965: HMS Fearless was a Royal Marine Landing Platform Dock (LPD), designed to put a Royal Marine Commando, its vehicles and equipment, on to an enemy occupied beach. She was laid down in 1963 and commissioned in 1965.

The Secretary of State for Defence at this time was the Right Honourable Dennis Healey MP. He had served with distinction during the North African and Italian campaigns during the Second World War.

I was a young private soldier who just had joined the battalion, the King's Shropshire Light Infantry (KSLI) at Easter of that year. Within a few short months of joining the battalion, then stationed in Plymouth, we were warned off to do the first full troop trials aboard Fearless. Why the Royal Marines, also stationed in that area, were not selected remains a mystery to me to this day!

Following days of work to waterproof our tactical vehicles to allow them to 'swim' ashore, we eventually boarded the ship to carry out the trials, which involved the first large scale amphibious landing undertaken since D-Day. We sailed around Land's End trying to adjust to life on board a Royal Navy warship. She was flat bottomed to enable her to get closer to the shore, and as a result very uncomfortable when the weather took a turn for the worse. My role, as a signaller, involved doing stags (shifts) in the battalion operations room, which was located just about as high on the ship as it was possible to get, which made the movement of the ship even more uncomfortable.

The time came, after a few days of abject misery, to disembark. We were given our muster points according to our roles and the disembarkation timetable. During this period the ship went to 'Action Stations', which involved closing all the watertight bulkhead doors. In the middle of these doors was a tiny hatch that could be opened to allow movement between stations. These were fine for sailors but were a disaster for soldiers loaded up with weapons and equipment, I was carrying a 45lb radio set on my back. There was simply no way any of us could get through these tiny hatches and the Captain refused to open the larger doors. Everything had to be taken off and handed through the hatch, not just once but at every bulkhead we came to. Of course, this added a significant amount of time to the schedule. They hadn't thought that one through!

We boarded the landing craft and were able to drive straight on to the beach - no 'swimming', we didn't even get the tyres wet. My boss chose to set up the Tactical HQ next to a derelict stone building. The sky became full of low flying aircraft and suddenly there were hundreds of khaki-coloured parachutes above us, one of the Parachute Battalions was dropping in to support us – an amazing sight. But communications with Fearless were becoming problematic, we could hear them well enough, but it wasn't so clever the other way. We were relying on them to supply naval artillery fire to 'shoot' us into our objective, it was imperative that they could hear us. I was just considering climbing to the top of the derelict building to elevate the antenna a little, that would give the radio a little more range, when Dennis Healey appeared on the scene. He was surrounded by photographers and several security men; he obviously wasn't safe enough being surrounded by several thousand British soldiers.



He introduced himself to my boss and then asked me what I was doing. I explained that I was about to climb to the top of the building to elevate the antenna, to which he promptly replied that he would do it for me. Well, you never look a gift horse in the mouth, do you? He took the antenna and started climbing, all the time the cameras were clicking away from all angles.

A picture of one of us climbing that roof was on the front cover of several national newspapers the following morning. If you can't guess which one, here's a clue – it wasn't me!

HMS Fearless was de-commissioned in 2002 and sold for scrap to Belgium several years later. Dennis Healey passed away in 2015.

Ron Gittings

A tourist on holiday in Great Britain was inside a church in Salford taking photographs when he noticed a golden telephone mounted on the wall with a sign underneath it that read “£10,000 per call.”



The tourist, being intrigued, asked the minister there who was strolling by what the telephone was used for. The minister replied that it was a direct line to heaven and that for £10,000 you could talk to God. The tourist thanked the minister and went along his way.

Next stop was in Liverpool. There, at a very large church, he saw the same golden telephone with the same sign under it. He wondered if this was the same kind of telephone he saw in Salford and he asked a nearby CRCW what its purpose was. She told him that it was a direct line to heaven and that for £10,000 he could talk to God. “O.K., thank you,” said the tourist, and he went on his way.

The tourist then travelled to Glasgow, Newcastle, Birmingham, Taunton, Nottingham, Cardiff, Cambridge, Southampton, Croydon and London. In every church he saw the same golden telephone with the same ‘£10,000 per call’ sign under it. The tourist then realised that there was one part of the country that he hadn’t visited so he booked a train from St.Pancras and headed to Yorkshire to see if the good folk who lived there had the same phone.

He arrived in Sheffield, and again, in the first church he entered, there was the same golden telephone, but this time the sign under it read “50 pence per call.” The tourist was surprised so he asked the Elder on duty at the church café about the sign. “I’ve travelled all over your country and I’ve seen this same golden telephone in many churches. I’m told that it is a direct line to heaven, but in all the other places I’ve visited the price was £10,000 per call. Why is it so cheap here?” The Elder smiled and answered, “You’re in Yorkshire now, son. It’s a local call.” God’s own county.

Supplied by Stephen Dalton

Memories

“Do this in remembrance of me”, Jesus said to his disciples. And in our communion service we are reminded that we do this “as oft as we drink it, in remembrance of Him, until He comes”. As I write those words – from memory (!), in my head I am once again a young man, hearing the voice of Rev Bernard Franklin at our church in Wolverhampton. I imagine that had I been a member of that privileged group, the Disciples, spending three years in the company of Jesus, and being taught by him, I would not be in need of much in the way of reminders. My head would be full of it. The disciples were, of course, working men, not intellectuals. Yet Luke’s account of Peter’s speeches in Acts show us that he (Peter) did other things as well as fishing. He studied and, of course, memorised the scriptures, and no doubt discussed them with his friends.

Oh yes, memories count. But they can be distressing as well as joyful, giving rise to pain as well as pleasure. Mercifully, the joyful ones have outnumbered the sad ones for me. It must have rained when I was a boy, yet in practically all my childhood memories the sun is shining. One I treasure from later life, is when, on a business trip to somewhere in South London I took my father along for a ride. Work done, we were able to spend time in Kew Gardens and visit Runnymede; a most enjoyable day together, and as I dropped him at home that evening, he said “Another happy memory”. Yes, memories are precious, and it is one of life’s great tragedies when the mind fails before the body, and someone with years to live, no longer recognises his or her own child. Brenda suggests that there may be readers who have their own treasured recollections to share. Why not send something to Ron, the editor, and he may find room for it.

It seems to be quite normal for our memory to be less reliable as we age. I once, in course of a sermon, quoted an adage I had acquired as a child, and commented that we remember something from childhood, even when we can no longer recall what we had for yesterday’s lunch. The reaction of the congregation assured me that that I am not alone in that. *It also confirmed that they were still awake—Brenda.*

But memories also give rise to dreadful conflicts and animosity. In Northern Ireland the Battle of the Boyne is still commemorated after 300 years. To our French neighbours we are still ‘Perfidious Albion’, the United Kingdom is not very united today, as we struggle with the Northern Ireland Protocol, and though the SNP is in disarray, there are still almost half of Scottish voters wanting independence. That is just the local stories. Around the world, millions have died through similar conflicts, often arising from long-forgotten events. How long, Father?

Hasten, O Lord, the day when your Kingship shall be known, man shall love man, and the “wild war music o’er the earth shall cease”. (MHB 911)

Maurice Coleman

75 years of the National Health Service

It was 75 years ago, on 5th July 1948, that the National Health Service (NHS) began operating – formally opened at the Park Hospital in Manchester, now renamed Trafford General.

The National Health Service Act provided for the establishment of a comprehensive health service for England and Wales. (Separate legislation was produced for Scotland and Northern Ireland.)

The Minister of Health at the time was Labour firebrand Aneurin Bevan, but the NHS came into being through the efforts of many others as well – notably Conservative Sir Henry Willink, who was Minister of Health in the Coalition government in 1944. His White Paper laid down all the basic elements of an NHS – that no-one was excluded, and that healthcare was free and based on need, not the ability to pay.

But the origins of the NHS went back many years, starting perhaps in the early 1900s, with socialist Beatrice Webb's Minority Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Law. It aimed to get away from the workhouse system, where those with no resources were expected to look after themselves. The report was dismissed by the Liberal government.

Strong ideas in the same vein had also come from biochemist Dr Benjamin Moore, from Liverpool, who is also credited with first use of the words "National Health Service". A novel called *The Citadel* by D J Cronin (also a doctor) drew attention to the inadequacies of health care at the time of its publication in 1937.

In the end, the NHS was based to a large extent on the Beveridge Report, published in 1942. William Beveridge was a Liberal politician, economist and social reformer who also had a strong interest in eugenics – the aim of improving the human race by controlling reproduction.

Green Pages

A round-up of environmental and climate-change news

including useful advice about what we can do and our progress as an Eco-Church

July 2023

Carbon Offsetting – is it worth it?

Carbon Offsetting can be defined as paying for projects to reduce greenhouse gases in the atmosphere as compensation for the greenhouse gas emissions (or Carbon Footprint) of an organisation or individuals. In this way Carbon Offsetting can be used to achieve net zero by balancing emissions, thus reducing overall emissions.

Many offsetting projects also have additional benefits, such as reducing biodiversity loss (eg. through tree planting) and providing employment in low-income areas. So, should we consider Carbon Offsetting to help us achieve net zero?

One argument against, is that this is a distraction from the real solutions to climate change, and can be merely a public relations stunt, or 'greenwashing'. Offsetting projects to date have not been sufficient to stop global warming; future offsetting projects alone are unlikely to be sufficient either. Offsetting may have a role, but the world needs emissions to be drastically reduced to have a real effect.

Investors and other stakeholders are beginning to expect large corporations to have plans to achieve net zero in line with the Paris Agreement. So there is a pressure for companies to go further than just reducing emissions, by advocating investment in offsetting and carbon removal technologies from the date targets are set. So the principle is that those causing more than a fair share of emissions should not just make serious reductions but also start offsetting now, well before 2030.

But we need to ask whether they are using Carbon Offsetting as an excuse for not taking practical steps. We also need to constantly review progress and plans for genuine emission cuts.

continued on next page

Projects that provide carbon offsets may seek to remove emissions (such as tree planting), or avoid emissions (such as forest preservation, use of solar energy, and cook-stove projects that reduce wood burned in open fires).

The cost of Carbon Offsetting varies by project, but is typically in the range of £10 to £20 per tonne of carbon dioxide (tCO₂). There are numerous organisations engaged in removal or avoidance projects, such as:

- Climate Stewards (*promoted in Eco Church materials*) has its own 'seal of approval' for endorsing "effective, streamlined standard assessing of net carbon mitigation for community-based projects in the developing world" at a cost of around £25/tCO₂
- Although The Woodland Trust don't offer Carbon Offsetting as such, they do state that every £100 donated will help care for enough woodland to capture around four tonnes of carbon. That's approx. £25/ tCO₂

There is much scope for disapproval of Carbon Offsetting as well as uncertainty over its effectiveness, but no organisation or project is perfect! It seems sensible to aim for ambitious emissions reductions and constantly reviewing progress and plans towards net zero, **alongside** offsetting in whatever reasonably considered way you are able and willing to give.

David Oglethorpe

You may want to think of it as Carbon Offsetting, or perhaps simply as a way of making regular donations to climate action charities who are working to reduce emissions in ways we cannot do ourselves. *(MO)*

Take part in the Swap Shop!

South Shropshire Climate Action (SSCA) attended the 'Next Generation Fair' at the Community Centre in Craven Arms on 20th May. Along with their usual information stand about SSCA and other organisations in the network, they held their first 'Swap Shop' event to encourage people to reuse children's toys, books and clothes. By reusing and sharing we can help each other through the cost of living crisis and help the planet by reducing carbon emissions and waste.

There were lots of satisfied customers and the remaining stock will be on their stall at **Ludlow Green Festival on Sunday 9th July**. So if you have any items for any age group (adults and children) to donate or swap including toys, games, books, DVDs CDs, household items, clothes etc., take them along to their stall. They are looking forward to seeing you there.

Urban farming in under-utilised spaces

Slow Food Birmingham has submitted a proposal to start urban farming on top of a car park to provide its community with healthy, local foods. The organisation has been around since 1989 and is committed to preventing the disappearance of local food cultures and traditions. They work to connect people with where their food comes from and inspire an active interest in local food production. They believe that food should be flavourful and healthy, grown without harming the planet and sold not only at accessible prices for consumers but prices that reflect fair conditions and proper pay to producers.

Their proposal for urban farming in Birmingham supports their mission. The development, if approved, would be built on the top floors of the Vyse Street car park in the Jewellery Quarter area, which currently has the smallest amount of green space, making traditional growing very difficult. Their farm would include a biodiversity centre, a café, and an education hub that would form partnerships with local schools to promote local food cultivation and cooking. The organisation wants to show their community that even though they are located in the middle of the city, it can still grow local produce 12 months of the year.

This initiative would help local hospitality businesses reduce their environmental impact and financial costs and would reduce the cost of grocery shopping for nearby residents. Moreover, it is a project that utilises unused space for urban farming. It would be completely sustainable as it wouldn't require building additional infrastructure. The car park would also host a hub for delivering locally grown produce by cargo bike to residents, businesses and food justice groups in the Jewellery Quarter and other nearby areas.

Slow Food Birmingham is working closely with Urban Design Hub and the Birmingham City Council to realize this idea for urban farming and to help reduce the city's carbon footprint while delivering quality, clean food to residents. Should the project be approved and reach its potential, it will serve as an example for other cities to look at unused space and find sustainable, environmental and local solutions for them.

Jamie D'Souza Happy Eco News

**Don't forget the Circuit 'Care for Creation' Away-Day on Sept 16th
put the date in your diary now.**

Developing alternatives to plastic payment cards

Over six billion plastic payment cards are produced and shipped worldwide every year. These cards are quickly replacing cash payments because they are a more convenient and secure way of paying. They typically comprise several layers of PVC plastic. Each card will contain approximately 5 grams of plastic, so that's 15,000 tonnes in total each year. Most will be discarded into landfill.

Since 2018, Mastercard has been working to develop more sustainable card options for their cards, including:

- Recycled PVC plastic, which reduces the need for more oil extraction.
- Polylactic Acid is a bio-sourced plastic produced from either corn or sugar starch. The cards can be industrially composted if they are collected and processed in the correct conditions.
- Polyethylene Terraphlate contains no chlorine or styrene and is more widely recycled. It can be a step towards introducing full circularity.
- Ocean-sourced cards are made from plastic waste found in the ocean or from coastal areas.

Mastercard is also exploring the end-of-life options for payment cards, because most materials used in these cards cannot be composted or recycled efficiently. The contaminants, such as the chips and magnetic tape, still need to be addressed as they cannot be composted, separated, or removed in the recycling processes. The emergence of new chemical recycling techniques, alongside the traditional mechanical processes, makes this an emerging option for cards which will likely see further improvement over the coming years. Mastercard is invested in research regarding the chemical recycling of plastics to find ways they can contribute to a more circular economy.

Mastercard's efforts will significantly reduce the need for plastic, especially as these cards continue to be manufactured each year. Although these cards are small, the impact can be huge, and it is important to reduce plastic use wherever we can.

Jamie D'Souza, Happy Eco News

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

Notes from the Editor:

Thank you to those who have passed favourable comments about the new format of the magazine and a 'thank you' to Edith from me for setting the scene over so many years. Here are some on going thoughts...

Deadline: 'Time limit for any activity' (Collins English Dictionary). The deadline for articles for the magazine is the 17th of each month, this gives me time to 'edit' it and get it produced in good time.

Sometimes life isn't just all sweetness and light, bad things happen to good people. It's sometimes a benefit to share those bad times with others and they do say that a trouble shared is a trouble halved. So please don't be reticent telling us about the trials that you have experienced as well as the good times, perhaps also telling us how your faith helped you through them.

Along the same vein, I think it's relevant to remember that the opinions of others are just as important to them as yours are to you, and they should be respected as such. One of my favourite sayings is 'You're perfectly entitled to your opinion, even if it is wrong!' But who is to judge which opinion is right anyway? Giving in gracefully is an art!

I enjoy, sometimes, playing 'devil's advocate' in order to encourage people to debate about the subject. A case in point is 'No-Mow-May', which has morphed into 'No-Mow-June'. **Would anyone like to express an alternative - from the point of view of cyclists who, at many of the road junctions on our rural roads, can't be easily seen because of the now uncut verges?**

Please note that the next edition of the magazine will be at the end of August.

The Skiffers

Returning by popular demand, the Skiffers will be performing once again at the church on Saturday 22nd July 2023 at 7.30pm. Entry will be free but donations will be gratefully accepted.

Refreshments served.

Recycled Paper – a balanced view.

Paper, in all its guises, is a necessary product especially in schools, offices, restaurants and hospitals and without it these places could not function properly. The environment, quite rightly, is today large in everyone's consciousness and there are many organisations that produce paper in a sustainable manner. There are, however, just as many that use 'recycled', 'green' and 'environmentally friendly' merely as marketing tools, whilst their product is not produced in the most environmentally friendly manner. Due to this rise in the quest for recycled paper, it is now considered as wasteful and harmful to the world to use virgin paper. In most cases the opposite is in fact true.

Recycled Fibres

On the face of it using recycled paper fibres seems like the best option. But let's look at the small print. Paper fibres can only be used a maximum of seven times before they are no longer viable, but that depends on the paper grade, and many don't even make it that far. It's impossible to know how many times the fibres have been re-used and overuse will produce a poor-quality product resulting in a less than pleasant experience in the toilet!

The process of making recycled fibres is not very hygienic. A study undertaken by Laval University shows a concentration of bacteria 100 to 1,000 times higher in recycled fibres against virgin ones. Whilst probably not enough to effect healthy people, this quantity could affect young children and those with a weakened immune system. Recycled paper mills also have a problem with bacterial slime, produced during the removal of inks and binding agents. A perfect breeding ground for bacteria and germs, some studies have found these bacteria to be associated with food poisoning. Whilst I have no evidence to show how this slime is disposed of – it's of no use to anyone – the chances are it goes to landfill.

Virgin Fibres

Chosen wisely, these fibres are no less environmentally friendly than recycled ones. The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) has certified that virgin paper is environmentally sound. Today's virgin paper is tomorrow's recycled paper and without it to start the entire process off the world would run out of paper within a matter of a few months.

Admittedly, trees must be felled to start the ball rolling, but these, very largely, are from managed estates. The push to use recycled paper is now actually causing fewer trees to be planted.

Modern production of virgin fibres is much more hygienic than the production of recycled ones and uses energy from waste wood rather than relying on the electricity or fossil fuels used by recycling mills. Short-fibre virgin paper produces a soft toilet paper and is more efficient to use, reducing the amount required to complete the job!

Summary

Recycled fibres sound like the way to go, but they are not as dependable or sustainable as perceived. When purchasing recycled products there are many things to consider other than just 'Recycled' on the packaging. It is too easy for 'dodgy' manufacturers to over-use the resources they need to manufacture the product, this will often put their employees' health at risk. Virgin fibres produce a better quality product and have the same value as recycled ones where the environment is concerned. And without them there would be no paper at all.

Source: www.papernet.com

Ron Gittings

Forgiveness:

Late for a meeting and unable to find parking, I pulled into a spot behind a church. It was only after I'd gotten out of the car that I spotted this sign: "No parking. Forgiveness is our business, but don't make it harder than it already is."

Which staff?

Several years ago the then Bishop of London reported to the General Synod that before attending a church function he had said he would bring his pastoral staff. "And how many seats will you want?" came the reply.

Not like it used to be:

I used to be able to do cartwheels. Now I tip over while pulling on my socks.

Offertory – the matter of giving ...

According to the Complete, unabridged version of the Collins Dictionary of English, the entry for 'Offertory' is 'the offerings of the worshippers at a Eucharist service' (C14 from Church Latin offertorium). One can interpret the word 'offering' in several ways, so let's investigate that a little. Many people's contribution doesn't necessarily involve money. There are stewards and those on various rotas who organise pragmatic issues weekly; Church Life and the Property and Finance Committee who deal with both the spiritual and essential practical health of our church community; and many others who share their life skills and experience for the benefit of all. Yet, we still need to address the financial issues, the importance of which has been analysed and discussed numerous times over recent years.

Certain elements contribute to this ongoing challenge. In the fast-moving world in which we all live now, especially involving technology, how should we take advantage of any benefits that present themselves for our charitable status? How do other charities cope, particularly in the way they process cash donations? The impact of Covid and its resultant lockdown has radically reduced the dependence on banknotes and coin, not only in this country but across the world, with a large growth in the use of 'plastic'. And yet, with our aging congregation, how should we balance the benefits (security, convenience, efficiency), with perhaps a natural reticence to address change?

So, here are a few facts for our readers' consideration (and also please see David's excellent appraisal of our financial situation in his report for the Cluster Council meeting on 15/06/2023):

- ❖ To start, let's take Christian Aid as an illustration. Many of you will recall the pre-lockdown annual collections by Ludlow Group for CA made door-to-door, followed by a large money-count lasting two days, often upstairs in our church. Covid largely put paid to that. A check of the CA website explains: - 'The most effective way to donate to Christian Aid is by making a regular donation. Like you, if we know how much money's coming in every month, then we know how much can go out.' (Our church could say the same!).

The preferred choice is to complete one of a variety of CA on-line forms to set up a 'cash donation' (although clearly nowadays cash per se isn't involved). Also, CA uses a contactless donation site called TapSimple, and there are others – JustGiving, GiveALittle,

with some providing their own contactless devices – SumUp & Zettle (useful for Wesley's perhaps?).

- ❖ Our church bank account is in the process of moving from Barclays, that has now closed. After many months of discussion, Lloyds in Broad Street is opening an account for us (sort-code 30-99-50, account number 57571268 on the n/o LUDLOW METHODIST CHURCH). But (and it is a BIG 'But') there is no escaping the changes in our financial strategy that will be forced upon us as a result. For example, all banks want to encourage customers' use of their automatic machines – not just the ATMs outside used for balances and cash withdrawals, but also the in-branch paying in of cheques and notes. It is the coin that is most expensive for them to handle and in recent years many (including Lloyds) have introduced a fee. By necessity as well, the customer requiring acceptance of coin needs to queue for a cashier. At this stage, it is unclear how much we will be charged by Lloyds for this service, but David advises that after our initial year, we shall be attract a fee for everything we pay into the church account. And indeed, will this move remain permanent? Will Lloyds be the next bank in town to close?
- ❖ Statistically, the use of weekly Offertory envelopes has declined in the last year. On average, there are 5-7 per week, out of a total church membership of 98. These envelopes cost £68 for a full year and take time to count and record. N.B. Switching from envelopes to standing order donations doesn't affect your existing Gift Aid status.
- ❖ And for those who donate already by standing order (again see David's report), a simple question – can you give a little more to help offset the harsh increase in our utility costs?

There is no denying the whole issue of offertory giving remains a sensitive one. As David says too, 'the Church is not in the business of giving up the use of cash', still for some it is more than that. By committing their contribution physically into the basket, it is a significant act of faith. Yet for our church the current moment is upon us when we need to be practical, aware of how we could use our resources more effectively and ask for everyone's help to streamline our financial arrangements to maximise on the present-day and capitalise for our future. If you need help or reassurance, please speak to David or Barbara. And finally, thank you for your consideration and support, whatever its nature and however it is achieved.

BMG

Dear Friends

As I write, there are less than three weeks before my farewell service, and the reality of the change that lies ahead is becoming ever more evident. There is much that could be said, but I shall restrict my thoughts in this final letter to what's most important – words of gratitude and words of encouragement.



There is so much to be thankful for over these last 8 years and it would be wrong to single out any individuals for fear of omitting others – I hope that you will all know how thankful Stella and I feel for you – whether for the humblest of prayers or the sharing of kind words, for the lovingly-made cakes, or the dedication of hour upon hour of essential work with a Henry, paintbrush or laptop. I'd like to mention two periods that were particularly significant.

The first, the pandemic. This came at a particularly difficult time for us with the death of my mother as lockdown began. But the church was at its best – coming together to make sure that no-one among the wider church family or our neighbours was isolated and forgotten. Many people patiently and faithfully participated in the Conference Call and online services with all the technical glitches that challenged us. Coffee and Chat and online prayer were supported. Folk were understanding of one another as difficult and controversial choices were made over when and how we met again in person. The steadfastness and love shown was strongly indicative of our deep roots of faith and fellowship. Thank you.

The second period was my sabbatical. For most it was an opportunity you never had – yet you showed no sign of resentment – quite the opposite – and prayed for me and the family, resulting in a time which was truly blessed.

For these particular times, and especially for the ongoing hours of steady and cheerful work for the Church and for God, we sincerely thank you.

Jesus says that “No-one who sets their hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.” It's time to move on – straining for the goal that lies ahead.

In spite of all the challenges of today, Ludlow Methodist Church has so much going for it! So, please keep loving one another, and your new Minister and her husband as you have loved us, accepting one another, listening to one another, laughing with one another. Don't forget to pray. Hold fast to your faith in the one who never changes, and remain hopeful. Our prayers remain with you.

And the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you, evermore.

Kim and Stella



The Rockerfellas in concert at the church on the 17th of June. A sum of £470 was donated to the church at a very entertaining evening.

Contact Numbers:

Minister: Rev Kim Stilwell
01584 318628

Church Administrator: Mrs Sarah Kellett
01584 879233

Community Chaplain: Mrs Ruth Downes
01584 890186



Website: www.ludlowmethodistchurch.org.uk

Church Stewards

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