Dear Friends,

Perhaps it seems a little forward to address you all as friends, for we haven't met, but I truly hope that soon, not only will we be brothers and sisters in Christ, but friends on a journey together. It is my hope that as I begin my journey in this place, I will walk alongside you all on the journeys you have already begun and that we may possibly wander new pathways together.

What can I tell you about myself? I love reading, walking and have three crazy cats – or perhaps I'm the crazy cat lady! I also love a cup of tea – I am rarely without one in my hand. It is so common to see me with one that when I left my previous circuit, I was gifted 9 mugs and several boxes of tea bags to keep me going!

I was born in Stoke-on-Trent where I worked as a primary school teacher, working with children of all ages and later became the SENCo. I have always loved teaching; children have a unique way of seeing the world and are always open to new ideas. I also went to teach in The Gambia, as part of a Methodist Church programme. I learnt a lot about myself and about God whilst teaching the children there and being part of their community – I am sure there will be plenty of time to share those stories in the future. However, I always knew that one day I would be a minister.

As a girl of around 8 years old, I would tell people that I was going to be a teacher, a missionary and a vicar. I believe that all three are part of who God called me to be. I have always felt a strong sense of call on my life which has never gone away, with God always opening doors to lead me where He wants me to go and I have learnt to trust Him and to try to follow humbly.

Eventually, I knew the time had come to fulfil that call that began as a child. I would love to say that I just obeyed, but I argued with God for a while – it was too soon, perhaps I was wrong...but of course, God knows best. I candidated for the ministry, was trained at the Queens Foundation and was stationed as a presbyter to the Barnsley circuit. I confess I had never heard of Barnsley, yet over my 8 years there I have grown in ministry, learnt a lot about myself and developed new skills.

When I went into stationing and read the profile for this circuit, I felt strongly that this was where I was called to be. I am looking forward to the adventure we will be on together. I pray that we will work together to continue showing God's love to those around us and offer glimpses of the kingdom to all we meet

God bless

And what does the Lord require of you?

To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God.

Micah 6:8

Congratulations

- To Eileen Burrows on reaching her 80th birthday at the beginning of June –
 joining the growing ranks of the 80+ in the congregation
- To **Yvonne** who has reached state pension age.
- To Chris James and Catherine Taylor on the completion of the Gower Ultra Hike on Saturday July 19/20 in an active time of 11 hrs 20 mins, ahead of the Challenge time of 12 hr with a resulting fund for Prostate Cancer UK of over £1,000 (inc. Gift Aid), so far see link https://www.justgiving.com/page/chris-james-1

Thank You.....

- To Sue and Peter Levitt for looking after us so well for the past year in the absence of a presbyter. They have exceeded everyone's expectations in the care and love they have shown us. Fortunately, they will continue to worship with us after the end of the connexional year.
 - From **Bruce Lane** for all the messages and prayers and cards following his stroke on June 20. He is pleased to report the prayers have been successful and he has made a complete recovery and has returned to the golf course.

Welcome

• To Claire Rawlinson who becomes our presbyter on 1 September. We look forward to her ministry. Claire gives a lot of detail about herself in her minister's letter. Claire is the minister for Norley, The Hurst, Blakelees Kingsley, Tarvin, Rowton and Christleton. She is living in the Tarvin manse with her 3 cats, Nessa, Clarke and Jasmine. Through her 8 years in Barnsley she has been involved in all sorts of activities, such as Messy Church, Soft Play worship, Messy Vintage, Care Home work, Bible studies etc, as well as being local preachers' tutor and the district Local Preachers' officer.

First Wednesday Walks

The June Wednesday Walk was led by Bruce and Ruth along the river Weaver, starting by Winsford salt mine and walking to Vale Royal locks and return, a distance of about 2.6 miles. There were 10 of us on a nice sunny day for an enjoyable walk. Bruce had decided to only walk as far as Garry and turn round with him, but Garry surprised us all by walking the full distance! Lunch had been



prebooked at the Plough Inn, Photo by Garry Words by Bruce and orders delivered, but on the day the road between the car park and the Plough was closed by roadworks so a considerable detour through Winsford was required both there and back. Hats off to sat nav.

The July Wednesday Walk was led by Vaughan and Garry. The twelve participants set off from the Leigh Arms to walk, as far as individuals were able, along the Navigation towards Dutton's Lock. It was a lovely summer morning and brought with it the challenge of identifying the wildflowers and butterflies along the route. Benches on the route meant that some of the group could happily sit and watch the world, and kayakers, go by whilst those who were able could head for the bridge and the Archimedes Screw generator. Heading back with the reverse view we then enjoyed a good meal at the Leigh Arms.



Photo and thumb by Garry.

Words by Garry and Vaughan



Photo by Garry (this time without his thumb)

In August Nine Norley walkers were led by Heather & Anthony around the perimeter of Lymm Upper Dam, taking in the wildfowl on the Dam & all the signs of Lord Leverhulme's preparatory constructions for his aborted grand plan to develop Lymm. The weather was very kind to us so one of the group even had shorts on! Due to the sudden closure of the adjacent Inn, we went on to plan B & dined at the Jolly Thresher Inn.

Anthony. 08/08/2025.

Future walks are planned for

Wednesday October 1st

Wednesday November 5th

Please note no walk is planned for September

Meet at the church by 9.45am to drive to the walk start. These days the walks are 1-3 miles maximum followed by a lunch in a local hostelry. You would be most welcome to join this leisurely activity.

Bruce

Annual Church Meeting held on 1st June 2025.

Seventeen people attended the Annual Church Meeting. which was Chaired by Rev'd Peter Levitt, after the morning service on 1st June.



As always, the formal parts of the Annual Church Meeting were dealt with very efficiently! The Stewards for the Church year 25-26 (starting 1st September) were elected unanimously. They will be John Dimelow, Mary Dimelow, Lewis Dimelow, Lesley Gough, Ruth Hosker, Ruth Lane & Bruce Lane, with Ruth Lane continuing as our Senior Steward. Philip Garner has decided to stand down as a Steward and we thank Philip for his loyal contribution

over many years. Our members of the Church Council for 25-26 were also appointed. They will be Hazel Dale, Oliver Dimelow, Jean Dunning, Michael Gough, Yvonne Roughsedge, Alison Twinn, Gay Wilson & Mike Wilson.

Those present agreed on two local charitable causes to support through our fundraising in the next year: Norley Scout Group (who are raising funds to refurbish the Scout Hut on Crabmill Lane) and OPAL, (a local charity which delivers services to reduce isolation and loneliness amongst older people). Fundraising events will be agreed in due course.

We also agreed to ask the Church Council to consider us dividing the monetary collection for the Food Bank collected in 25/26 to be divided equally between the West Cheshire and Runcorn Food banks, as both support our local area.

As we reflected on the previous year, we noted our enormous gratitude to Revds. Sue and Peter Levitt who have provided Ministerial support over the last 12 months. They will stand down from this role in September when Rev'd Claire Rowlinson takes up her role as Minister to the 'rural churches' in the Circuit. Sue and Peter have assured us that they will continue to be very much involved with Norley, and Sue will continue as Pastoral Secretary. Sue and Peter thanked everyone for all their support too.

The Open-Door Café opened in September 2024 and has attracted a steady stream of visitors from the local area – some are regular attenders, and others attend from time to time or when they are passing through the village (occasionally on a bicycle or a horse!). The café is well supported by a team of volunteers, some of whom are members of Norley Methodist Church and other residents, with Lesley and Mike co-ordinating proceedings. Through the café, we feel we are building stronger relationships with members of the local community and others including our local Councillor, Gillian, the Parish Council and the WI.

Over the last year we have also been pleased to develop our links with Norley School. Mary and Yvonne both work at the school and are a very valuable link. Rev'd Sue and Michael Gough are now both Governors. The recent VE day celebration and the Prayer Day held before Easter were all greatly enjoyed by the staff, pupils and members of our Church and local community.

Our next Annual Church meeting will be held in May/ June 2026.

Property Matters

The last quarter has seen the exterior treatment of the rear wall of the church with water-repellent paint to ensure there is no damp in the church. Completion of the external redecoration of the rear of the church now the bees' nest has been removed was delayed by storm Floris. We hope to complete it by the end of September.

The redecoration of the lounge will probably be held over to October though the surplus contents have been removed to the storeroom and the lounge is usable as an extension to the open door café.

The protective carpet strips in the vestibule have been permanently removed. John and

Lewis are busy with the annual check list to identify property needs for the next connexional year.

Bruce, John and Lewis



Solar Panels Update

Our solar panels generated 1514Kwh of electricity during the last quarter, resulting in a payment to the



church of £1,165.70 exceeding all previous payments except for the equivalent quarter last year (of £1,230). Altogether we have been paid £25,298 in 13 ½ years, a pretty good return on our £7,500 investment which will continue returning for a further 11 ½ years. More importantly we have generated 46198 Kwh in total. If this amount of electricity had been made by burning coal, some 25,000kg of Carbon Dioxide would have been emitted to the atmosphere and contributed to global warming. Bruce

Church Council Meeting held on 25th June 25

As is our usual pattern, the recent June Church Council meeting spent much of the meeting time reviewing and discussing the various activities we run at Norley Methodist Church. It's very helpful to do this annual 'stocktake' of our activities!

We were pleased to hear how our partnerships both with Norley primary School and St John's Church (& the Benefice) have developed over the last year. Rev'd Sue has recently been appointed as a Governor, and she has regular involvement with the school through leading assemblies and providing other support. Michael Gough also continues as a Governor



and has been involved with audits and reviews at the school in the last year. Yvonne and Mary who both work at the school, also provide a valuable link. The recent Prayer Day and involvement in the VE Day celebrations showed how our links are developing.

St John's and the Benefice are currently without a Vicar; However, we have met with members of their leadership team regularly and have subsequently enjoyed shared Carol Singing evenings, a shared Remembrance Sunday service and close working together through Christian Aid week. We hope to continue to build links as we go forwards, with a joint service being held at Norley Methodist Church on 31st August, and a joint Remembrance Sunday Service at St John's.

Our regular activities continue and are appreciated by those who attend: the Wednesday Walk, Coffee Plus Coffee Mornings, and Soup Lunches all continue to provide opportunities for fellowship. The Open-Door Café has also provided opportunities for us to build closer relationships with residents.

Through the weekly newsletter, Outreach magazine, website and our Facebook pages we are keeping in touch with many people – here, near and far, and we are grateful to all involved in putting together these various communication channels.

Fundraising has continued this year. Most recently just over £1500 was raised in the Christian Aid campaign, and a successful concert enables us to provide donations to 'LIFTED' and the North West Ambulance Charities.

The Church Council noted that over the next year we will support the Norley Scout Group and OPAL (as agreed at the Annual Church meeting). The proposal to divide monetary donations to the Food Bank between the West Cheshire and Runcorn Food Banks was agreed. Food donations will continue to be taken to the West Cheshire Food Bank.

The main highlights for property and finance are covered elsewhere in Outreach.

Finally, we noted that Rev'd Claire Rowlinson will be taking over as our Minister from September, and so this was the last Church Council meeting to be Chaired by Rev'd Peter. We noted our thanks and appreciation for the support Rev'ds Peter and Sue have given us over the last year, and are pleased that they will continue to be part of the 'Norley family' with Sue continuing as Pastoral Secretary.

Lesley Gough

Norley Methodist Church Diary September – November 2025

Date	Time	Preacher	Activity	
September				
1 st	7.30pm		Welcome Service for the Rev'd Claire Rawlinson at Tarvin Methodist Church	
2 nd	10.00am - noon		'Open Door' Café	
7 th	10.45am	Revd Peter Levitt	Morning Worship with Holy Communion	
9 th	10.00am - noon		'Open Door' Café	
13 th	9.30am		Autumn Synod venue tbd	
13 th	10.00am - noon		Coffee Plus	
14 th	10.45am	Prof Neville Ford	Morning Worship	
16 th	10.00am - noon		'Open Door' Café	
21 st	10.45am	Revd Ian Rigby	Morning Worship	
23 rd	10.00am - noon		'Open Door' Café	
23 rd	7.30pm		Circuit Meeting at Saughall	
24 th	12.15pm		Soup'n'Pud Lunch	
27 th	10.00am		Decorating the church for Harvest	
28 th	10.45am	Revd Claire Rawlinson	Harvest Festival	
30 th	10.00am - noon		'Open Door' Café	
October				
1 st	10.00am		First Wednesday Walk	
5 th	10.45am	Revd David Copley	Morning Worship with Holy Communion	
7 th	10.00am - noon		'Open Door' Café	
11 th	10.15am	Revd Claire Rawlinson	Joanne and Genevieve's Wedding Blessing	
12 th	10.45am	Mrs Elizabeth Holmes	Morning Worship	
14 th	10.00am - noon		'Open Door' Café	

Norley Methodist Church Diary September – November 2025

October	continued			
14 th	7.30pm		Preachers' Meeting venue tbd	
18 th	10.00am - noon		Coffee Plus	
19 th	10.45am	Mr Andrew Ellams	Morning Worship	
21 st	10.00am - noon		'Open Door' Café	
25 th	10.00am - noon		Shoebox Saturday	
26 th	10.45am	Mr Mike Ridley	Morning Worship with Shoeboxes	
28 th	10.00am - noon		'Open Door' Café	
29 th	12.15pm		Soup'n'Pud Lunch	
November				
2 nd	10.45am	Revd Claire Rawlinson	Morning Worship with Holy Communion	
4 th	10.00am - noon		'Open Door' Café	
5 th	10.00am		First Wednesday Walk	
9 th	To be decided		Remembrance Day service at St Johns with 1 st Norley Scouts	
11 th	10.00am - noon		'Open Door' Café	
16 th	10.45am	Revd Tim McQuiban	Morning Worship	
18 th	10.00am - noon		'Open Door' Café	
19 th	7.30pm		Circuit Meeting on Zoom	
22 nd	10.00am - noon		Coffee Plus	
23 rd	10.00am	Prof Neville Ford	Joint Service at The Hurst Methodist Church	
25 th	10.00am - noon		'Open Door' Café	
26 th	12.15pm		Soup'n'Pud Lunch	
30 th	10.45am	Revd Sue Levitt	Morning Worship	

The following meeting dates will be set once Claire is in post

Church Council	September/October	Church Leadership Team Meeting	? November
Pastoral Meeting	September		

Update from the Spiritual Committee



Ministerial Cover

We welcome our new Minister, Rev'd Claire Rawlinson, who will take up her appointment as of 1st September 2025, and we pray that her ministry at Norley, and elsewhere in the North Cheshire Circuit, will be richly blessed.

The Spiritual Committee offers its heart-felt love and thanks to Rev'ds Sue and Peter Levitt for their worship and church leadership over the last twelve months, and we are pleased that they will remain part of our congregation at Norley going forward. Thank you Sue and Peter!

Worship

In the on-going spirit of ecumenism, there will be a Joint Service with the churches of the United Benefice of Norley, Kingsley and Crowton, along with The Hurst, Kingsley, on Sunday 31st August (10.45am) at Norley Methodist Church. Additional parking will be available at Norley Village Hall on High Street, Norley. The service will be jointly led by Rev'd Sue Levitt and Rev'd Hilary Merrington of the Benefice and will also be an opportunity to introduce Rev'd Claire Rawlinson to the village and its Churches.

Harvest Festival will be led by Rev'd Claire Rawlinson on 28th September. As in previous years, help will be required to 'decorate' the church on Saturday 27th September.

Our annual 'Shoebox' Sunday will be held on 26th October. As per last year, we will be providing gifts via the appeal operated by 'Teams4U'. If you are able to participate this year then the boxes will be packed on Saturday 25th October.

This year, a single Remembrance Service will be held for Norley village at the parish church of St John the Evangelist, Norley on 9th November; there will not be a service at Norley Methodist Church.

Our quarterly United Service with The Hurst, Kingsley, will be on 23rd November at The Hurst (10am).

Dates for services with Holy Communion at Norley Methodist Church are as per the Autumn Plan: 7th September, 5th October, 2nd November.

Advent Sunday (doesn't time fly) will be 30th November.

-//-

The Spiritual Committee is open to all attendees of Norley Methodist Church. Meetings are quarterly to look ahead at worship requirements in the up-coming quarter, put plans in place for supporting activities, and consider the development/adaptation of liturgy to be attractive to people seeking a spiritual home at Norley Methodist Church. All are welcome.

Michael Gough Convener, Spiritual Committee



Saturday 27th September 10.00am Decorating thre Church for Harvest

Hope to see you there

Harvest Festival Sunday 28th September





10.45am Led by Rev'd Claire Rawlinson

Soup and pudding lunches

Wed 24th September Wed 29th October Wed 26th November at 12.15pm Everyone welcome!

(Please contact <u>Lesley.gough@mail.com</u> to reserve your place)





We are open and you are welcome!

The Open Door Café at Norley Methodist Church Maddocks Hill, Norley Cheshire, WA6 8JT. Every Tuesday 10am – 12 noon



(A member of the Places of Welcome network)

COFFEE +

10am - 12 noon

- 13th September
- 18th October
- 22nd November

Come and join us for Coffee, Cakes, Cheese Scones, quizzes and great conversation in the Open Door Room.



Finance Review

As I prepare these finance reports for Outreach, I often wonder who reads them and what you think about them. Do you open Outreach with eager anticipation of an exciting finance report, or realise you've stumbled over the cure for insomnia, or skip to the next more interesting item?

As we know, the Church Council is the properly elected trustee body responsible for the financial affairs of the church and they – the Council members – receive reports at every meeting in sufficient detail to assure them that all is in order, and if it isn't, why. Their Autumn meeting receives and adopts the audited accounts and financial report for the previous Methodist year (which, as we all know by now, runs from September 1st to August 31st).



Of course, it's good to share with the wider Outreach readership that our finances are in good order, but in general that just requires a sentence or two. Once a year, without blowing our own trumpet too loudly, the report does list the much appreciated donations the church has made to external organisations, and as the next edition will report, the total amount will be in excess of £5000, for the first time, for the year 2024-25.

Many readers know my commitment (some would say obsession!) to ensure that we claim as much as possible through HMRC's gift-aid system. Excluding donations made to external bodies (known as 'collections passed through') in 2024-25, in round numbers, we will receive £5700 from HMRC as part of the £33,000 church income – that's 17%. What would we do without it? Just a reminder that all tax-payers may declare their donations/collections for gift-aid and that, under GASDS (HMRC's Gift Aid on Small Donations Scheme), all cash donations of £30 or less per person per occasion attract the 25% gift-aid (which is why we always invite donations rather than make charges); of the £5700 reclaim, £1000 came through GASDS from cash donations for Sunday refreshments, Saturday Coffee+ mornings, Open Door Café, Soup Lunches, Sunday cash collections and other occasional donations – it's so important.

If Outreach had a 'letters to the editor' feature, people would be able to say what they think about my humble contributions, and whether, indeed, they always value them, other than perhaps knowing that we're keeping the wolf from the door and needn't worry. This year's equivalent finance report reflects much the same message as last year's, i.e., income gently increasing, some ups and downs in expenditure (especially related to the circuit assessment and property), but overall, nothing to worry about. Little Red Riding Hood need not fear here.

Thanks be to God, to everyone who continues to give so generously and to HMRC. Need I say more?

John Bell, Treasurer, August 2025.





As in previous years, the Norley CA Group (Norley Methodist Church, St John's Norley, Christ Church, Crowton) participated in fund raising in the Norley area. This year's Christian Aid collection amounted to £1503.47.

Many thanks to all who donated; Christian Aid is most grateful, and the funds will be spent on climate change projects supporting farmers in Guatemala.

Michael Gough Co-ordinator, Norley CA Group On behalf of Christian Aid

Shoebox Saturday and Sunday 25/26 October

Come along on Saturday 25th October to the church from 10-12 and help to put together Shoeboxes to go to a child who may not get any other Christmas present

The boxes will be received in the service on Sunday 26th October together with completed boxes from other members of the congregation

Teams4U is the charity we are supporting again this year as they work with 'in country' partners like the Red Cross to help find children that are most in need. Last year the shoeboxes were going to children in Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Bosnia and Romania. Teams4U also give families 'home' shoeboxes which give parents items to use in the kitchen and around the house and we have enjoyed thinking of the adults as well as the children at this time.

Last year the Saturday morning was very busy filling 26 shoeboxes and 8 more were



added at the very happy service on Sunday.

Donations towards transporting the 34 shoeboxes amounted to £225 including gift aid – a magnificent help towards Team4U's work. The donations are kept separate from the boxes not in them

News from Teams4U

Ukraine Summer Camp is back!

This summer we are back with the Ukraine Summer Camp for **over 150 children** to have a safe place to learn, play and live comfortably. Due to the severe weather conditions, **we** have had to build the camps from scratch this year - building strong structures that can withhold the weather conditions and house 200 children!

The Summer Camp is about to kick off in the beautiful Carpathian Mountains with children travelling from villages across Ukraine.

We are urgently raising funds to support the Summer Camp & you can donate safely on our website here. Every child deserves to be away from the bombings, in a safe space where they can just be children - and you can help make that happen!



Changes to the Outreach Content

At the suggestion of the church council. The rotas for stewards – vestry, communion, and door- the Flower rota and the Coffee rota are no longer published as the back 2 pages of the Outreach magazine. Everyone who is on the rotas receives their own copy, so nothing is gained by publishing more broadly.

In addition, on page 3 we have ceased to publish the birthdays of those baptised in our Church until they are 18 in recognition of the current society concerns opposite GDPR

Bruce