

OUTREACH

THE QUARTERLY MAGAZINE FROM NORLEY METHODIST CHURCH

May, 2022

Friends,

The Heart of Worship

“I’m comin’ back to the heart of worship, and it’s all about you. It’s all about you, Jesus”. So runs the chorus of one of Matt Redman’s worship songs (*Singing the Faith* 437). Worship really is at the centre of who Christian people are. Isaiah celebrates that God’s people are set aside for worship (Isaiah 43: 7, 21) as does the writer of the letter of Peter (1 Peter 2:9).

If we’re honest, who or what do we worship? If New Testament scholar Greg Beale is correct, then this question truly matters because he suggests in his landmark book that “we become what we worship”.

I am grateful for the education that I received and remember with thanks all of the teachers that taught and encouraged me. For a few years I attended a state school with an ancient foundation. Every year there would be a service in the parish church on “Founders Day”. In this setting with the stained glass depicting the saints of old, the history of the school’s endowment was recited with the various amounts bequeathed accounted for. Afterwards the headmaster was talking to the Chair of governors and Rector as I passed, minding my own business. In the context of an established, good-humoured repartee, the headmaster said: “Of course, Emison would not approve. He would not think it religious enough”. “Not at all, Sir” I replied, “I thought it was highly religious, just not *Christian*”. A clip around the ear would have been appropriate, but instead, the Rector found me later and whispered: “Wait until I tell your dad. Well said!”.

Who or what is at the heart of our worship?

Some of you know that I like a good bellow (sing). Does the music *point* to Jesus or are we in danger of worshipping the music itself? Do we worship our buildings? Do we worship the tradition in which we have been raised? Do we come to church seeking affirmation of who we are, perhaps even hoping that our standing in our communities will be enhanced?

On Sabbatical, I’m going to be trying to get back to the heart of worship. After leading 1022 Sunday services in my ministry so far, I’m going to receive from others, drawing upon the widest possible range of worship styles and traditions and seeking again its heart and focus: the God we see in Jesus Christ. Everything else that we do is supposed to point us to Jesus and if it doesn’t, then it had become idolatrous.

I am grateful to you all for the gift of sabbatical and ask your support to those who will provide cover for me over these months. I gently encourage all of you to join me in the necessary, constant need to refocus our lives on the worship of God so that we might grow and become more like the one that we worship.

Grace and peace.

Andrew

Pastoral Piece

Greetings Everyone,

I hope you have all been keeping well, and enjoying the spring weather when permitted.

We know COVID has not gone away (and probably never will !!) but here at Norley our Pastoral Team continue to support whenever needed and for whatever reason. Here we are already in the fifth month of the year, which sad to say makes me a year older having just celebrated a birthday !! (they say “you’re as old as you feel” so why do I feel really, really old most days).

I think this leads me in my verse for you all.

STAY. POSITIVE.

Some days, we wonder why life is so difficult. Things happen that leave us feeling as though we have little control over our circumstances.

On those days, remember that hope is a gift we can give ourselves... When we choose this attitude and tap into our inner reserves, we are rewarded with the knowledge of what we have learned in life. That decision to stay positive and remain hopeful is a key that unlocks the door of possibilities, and when shared, returns to renew the spirit.

May hope be your blessing today.

(Poem by Marci)

With grateful thanks to the Pastoral Team for all that they continue to do.

May Gods Blessings be with you all.

Margaret Hogan 8/5/22

Arrangements for Andrew’s Sabbatical

As you may recall from the Spring 2022 Outreach, Andrew will be taking a well deserved sabbatical over the summer, commencing on 15th May. Arrangements during Andrew’s absence have been put in place to support us in Norley during this time and at the same time allow Andrew to focus on his sabbatical.

Revd David Bintliff will be the ministerial contact for urgent pastoral needs and emergencies until 31st July and David can be contacted on his home phone number, 01928 209818, or by email, david.bintliff@methodist.org.uk. We will confirm the ministerial contact for August in due course through the notices.

A sabbatical support group has also been established across Frodsham and Norley Methodist Churches and Ruth Hosker and John Bell are representing Norley on this group. They will act as a link to Andrew for any essential matters which you might ordinarily communicate to Andrew. From 15th May to 12th June please contact Ruth Hosker on mobile 07724337251 or ruth.hosker@btinternet.com and from 13th June contact John Bell on 01606 301198 or belljohna@btinternet.com. Please contact Ruth and John rather than trying to contact Andrew directly. Andrew will be back with us from 1st September.

The Choir at Norley



The Harmony Choir

My thanks to the choir members for their commitment, turning up in all weathers and coping to fit in with their busy diaries. We enjoyed the fellowship with coffee and cake and often with serious discussions in putting the world to rights, including Brexit !!!



The Band of Hope & Joy

My grateful thanks to Rajan for supporting me in organising the room for rehearsals, printing the number of copies of music as required, helping me with serving refreshments and carting the heavy keyboard and setting it up in church for special services. Having sold our house, we are not sure of our plans. It has been an enormous privilege to have worked with the choir I would like to end with the words from Martin



The Choir

Luther. "Next to theology, I give music the highest place and honour. Music is the art of the prophets, the only art that can calm the agitations of the soul; it is one of the most magnificent and delightful presents God has given us."

Finally wishing you all the best of health and happiness, I take my bow.

Saro Jesudason

Updated Covid precautions

Updated Covid precautions were discussed and unanimously agreed at the Church Council meeting on 22nd March and reflect the national change in strategy to 'Learning to live with Covid'.

The emphasis of the revised precautions is a move away from protection from Covid spreading in a service by masks etc. to trying to ensure nobody attending has Covid in the first place, so that protection measures inside the building are less crucial.

In summary...

Please help reduce the risk of bringing Covid into the building by:

- Not attending if you have Covid or 'have symptoms which may be Covid (cough, sore throat, cold-like symptoms etc).
- Considering taking a Lateral Flow Test in the 24 hours before attending Church: Taking a test is encouraged and it may identify if you have Covid but are symptom free, or if you are 'pre-symptomatic'. However, we understand that taking a lateral flow test may be difficult for some people, and there is a cost implication from April, therefore this measure is 'encouraged' rather than 'compulsory'.
- Sanitising your hands before entering the Church

Whilst in the Church...

- Please maintain a social distance (one seat in the main worship area) between households whilst inside the Church.
- Wearing face masks inside the Church is no longer compulsory. You may, of course, continue to wear a mask if you prefer to do so.

Other procedures for Holy Communion, ventilation of the building before services, monitoring use of the building by different users during the week, taking collections and cleaning will remain unchanged.

Some members of our congregation may feel more cautious than others, so please be aware of their wish to continue with mask wearing and maintain social distancing.

Refreshments and Flowers:

The return of refreshments after the service from Easter Sunday (including crème eggs on that occasion) was greatly welcomed by everyone!

You will be aware that there is a one-way system for collecting your tea/coffee: going through the door at the back of the Church through to the old Sunday School room to collect your drink. This is to reduce bottlenecks whilst refreshments are being served. There is plenty of seating in the Open Door room for everyone.

It is lovely to have flowers once again in Church! Please speak to one of the Stewards if you are aware of someone who may appreciate receiving the flowers following the Sunday service.

Everyone's contribution to providing refreshments and flowers is greatly appreciated. If you can offer to help in any way, please let Ruth (Lane) know.

Review of our Covid precautions: Our Covid precautions will be kept under review by the Church Leadership Team and the Church Council, and changes may be made should the need arise. Any further changes will be communicated via the weekly notices.

Lesley Gough, Church Council Secretary.

1st Wednesday Walks

March 1st Wednesday walk

Eleven hardy souls turned up on a rather drizzly morning for a walk led by Bruce and Ruth around the formal gardens at Tatton Hall. One highlight was the Italian Gardens built by Paxton in the 1860s just in front of the mansion, and another was the fabulous Japanese Garden from 1910. The maze caught the attention of many – the second picture shows Heather standing by the tree in the centre to prove her success at negotiating the maze.



To our surprise the fernery was open as was the conservatory, but not the orchid house.

We spent a couple of hours going round the garden but probably only covered 3 - 4Km. All eleven were pleased to get a hot drink and warm up in the cafeteria at the end of the walk.

Bruce

April's Wednesday walk was to have been led by Anthony and Heather but was cancelled at the last minute as they returned from their 55th wedding anniversary holiday with Covid, Fortunately, they made a full recovery before the next month.

Wednesday Walk 4th May 2022.

This walk was led by Heather & Anthony around part of the Lymm Heritage Trail. We had 8 members taking part along the Bridgewater Canal & then back along part of the Trans Pennine Trail (which runs from Southport To Hull), finally returning through Slitten Gorge where we viewed the remains of the 18th century slitting mill. Near the mill we had a good view of a pair of grey wagtails, a fleeting view of a heron & a carpet of Spring woodland native flowers. The weather was wet on our journey to & back from Lymm but thankfully remained dry for our walk but started raining as we entered the pub for lunch.

A.Davies. 4/5/22

Future walks are

1st June led by Garry & Vaughan

6th July led by Bruce & Ruth

3rd August

Why not join us for a walk in good company?

Vestry Stewards and Welcome Stewards

From June 1st the services at Norley will be managed by 2 Vestry Stewards each week, and arrivals for the service will be greeted by one or two Welcome Stewards. Ruth has agreed a rota for the Vestry Stewards and Bruce has set up a Welcome Stewards rota – see the back page of this edition for details.

We are grateful for all of this voluntary support which makes our services so welcoming and enable them to run so smoothly. The duties for these two different stewarding duties have been agreed by the Church Leadership Team and are detailed below

Vestry Steward Duties

There are usually two types of stewards, one for the congregation (Welcome Steward) and two for the preacher (Vestry Steward).

The 2 Vestry Stewards make arrangements for the service, set the church up for the service, look after the preacher, at least one remaining with them in the vestry, and close up the church after the service.

Making arrangements for the service

The Vestry Steward will contact the preacher by the Monday before the service to tell him/her the procedures that are in place (including the offertory arrangements and the option to bless them in the service) and to request the Order of Service early both for the organist and so that readers can be found if required. Currently readers are sent the NRSV version of

the readings so that they can print it out and bring it to the lectern without having to touch the Bible.

If the preacher wants to use the A/V system, then they should contact Michael Gough, or if he is not available, Ruth Lane, for instructions on how to use the system.

The Vestry Steward needs to obtain the safe key from the previous week's Vestry Steward.

Setting the church up for the service

- 1) Open the doors 10 minutes before people arrive to get the church well ventilated.
- 2) Set up the sanitiser stations at the front entrance and the side entrance.
- 3) Turn on the sound system and the lights including the one behind the screen.
- 4) Put the hymn numbers on the hymn boards.
- 5) Check that hymn books and service books are set out for the congregation.
- 6) Set out the collection baskets in the porch and in the Open-Door room.
- 7) Once the service is ready to start, ensure the back door is closed and locked with the key in the lock.

When there are 2 Welcome Stewards, one can be asked to assist with setting up the church.

Looking after the preacher

Once the preacher has arrived, one Vestry Steward needs to stay with the preacher in the vestry, ensuring the preacher is set up for the service, get the preacher wearing the roving microphone (changing the batteries if it is the first Sunday of the month), pray for them before the start of the service, and introduce them to the congregation at the start of the service, if appropriate. The numbers attending are counted and recorded to ensure everyone is accounted for should an evacuation be necessary.

At the end of the service

- 1) Invite the congregation to refreshments via the vestry door once the refreshments have been prepared.
- 2) Ensure the offertory and any other donations are given to the Treasurer asap after the end of the service or are bagged and dated and left in the safe for the treasurer.
- 3) Recover the roving microphone to the vestry, take down the hymn numbers, bring in the sanitiser stations, turn off the sound system and the lights.
- 4) Arrange to distribute the flowers to a needy recipient,
- 5) Record the attendance numbers, flower recipients and readers on the notice board sheets.
- 6) Lock the front and side doors of the church after everyone has left.

If requested to do so, the Welcome Stewards can assist with closing the church.

Welcome Steward Duties

The Welcome Steward(s) need to arrive at least 20 minutes before the service start time and ensure both front doors are fully open.

Their role in the porch is to welcome people by asking if they are 'well and covid free' in a friendly and welcoming way. If they have forgotten to use the hand sanitiser, the welcome Steward should remind them to do so before entry.

Once the service is underway, the Welcome Stewards close the doors if the weather is inclement and join the congregation during the first hymn.

If there are 2 Welcome Stewards, one can, at the request of the Vestry Stewards, assist in setting up the church prior to the service.

After the service, at the request of the Vestry Steward, the Welcome Steward can assist the Vestry Stewards with closing the church.

For the first time in a generation, global poverty is rising. Covid-19, conflict and the climate crisis are pushing more of our global neighbours into a struggle for survival. Norley has a proud record of responding to Christian Aid's call and this year we stand together with our neighbours in Zimbabwe, a country where the impact of Climate Change is keenly felt and where drought is leading to widespread hunger. Drought starves! So, your donations go to Christian Aid's in-country partners providing training in farming skills and developing and harvesting drought-resistant crops.

The familiar 'red' envelopes will also be available over the course of Christian Aid Week at Norley St. Johns, Norley Methodist Church and Christ Church, Crowton. But if you miss this opportunity then you can easily donate online at ...

<https://envelope.christianaid.org.uk/envelope/norley-ca-group-e-envelope>

Michael Gough

March 22nd Church Council

Here is a summary of the main points from the meeting:

- We agreed to a relaxation of our Covid restrictions from 3rd April and re-introduction of refreshments after the Sunday morning service and flowers in Church from Easter Sunday. (Please see a separate article and the weekly notices for further details).
- The Pastoral team continue to offer care and support in the local community – for which all are extremely grateful.
- The Spiritual Committee update is included elsewhere but we noted the challenges of covering all services across the Circuit with Ministers and Preachers. Andrew will be taking over care of two further churches from September.
- Our Outreach here, near and far via the production of 'Outreach' magazine, our ongoing support to the Foodbank, and support to Christian Aid and other charities working in areas of the world with greatest need, were all noted. Closer to home, Andrew reported that he is seeking to develop closer links with the Anglican community in Norley via Rev Ron Iveson. We will all also try and establish other links with lay workers at St John's.
- Finance and property reports were also received – with further detail reported elsewhere. The Church Council is very grateful to John for his ongoing diligent work as Treasurer and to Bruce, John D and Lewis for their ongoing work in care and maintenance of our building.
- Ruth was pleased to report that our safeguarding processes, checks and training are in good order.
- At a Circuit level Andrew and Simon Kelly reported that there is ongoing consideration of the requirements as to what individual churches need from an ordained Minister – particularly relevant since Ministerial cover across the Circuit will be significantly stretched from September onwards when Revds. David Bintliff and David Goodwin move on from their current posts. Andrew was keen to emphasise that although he will have responsibility for two more Churches from September, he will always be available at times of need and will make time to meet with anyone who requires this.
- Andrew will be on Sabbatical leave from May 15th, and with addition of annual leave, will return to his regular Ministerial duties from 1st September. During this time Revd David Bintliff will provide Ministerial support until August, with arrangements for August to be confirmed. Ruth Hosker and John Bell will provide a channel of communication to Andrew on any matters which he needs to be aware of during his Sabbatical leave.
- The next Church Council meetings will take place on June 21st and October 4th.

Lesley Gough, Church Council Secretary

Annual Church Meeting

Our Annual Church Meeting was held on the 8th May as part of the Sunday morning service. It was good to have the meeting in person again – for the last two years we have held the meeting via Zoom!

We spent some time reflecting on the last year and everyone was pleased that we are now meeting regularly in Church, and we have been able to relax many of the Covid restrictions. Most people have been able to return to the weekly services in person, but for those who haven't, the weekly streamed service from Frodsham, set up by our Minister, Andrew, at the beginning of the pandemic, continues to be very important and greatly appreciated. We also noted that the Pastoral Committee have been very active over the last year, providing a tremendous amount of support to members and friends in the local community. A few members of the church were also thanked for different contributions over the last year: Michael Gough organised online prayer meetings twice a week for 10 months during the pandemic, as well as organising prayer days at the start of Lent. Michael has also recently completed his training to become a Local Preacher. Barbara Garner stood down after many years of loyal service as our Communion Steward and we are very grateful to Alison Twinn and Yvonne Roughsedge for taking over this role. The CLT were also thanked for their continued efforts throughout the last year including their consideration and guidance as we have moved out of Covid restrictions in Church.

In the year ahead, we have new challenges to face including the idea of 'Eco-Church' which was discussed at a recent Synod meeting – this may be a good mission opportunity in our local community. Watch this space!

The main matters of business covered at the meeting, were the election of Stewards (which we refer to as Vestry Stewards, (as distinct from 'Welcome Stewards' and Communion Stewards') and Congregation Representatives to the Church Council. We also agreed which charities we should support.

The following Stewards were elected: Ruth Lane, Bruce Lane, Philip Garner, Ruth Hosker, Mary Dimelow, John Dimelow, Lewis Dimelow, Lesley Gough, Michael Gough. Our Congregational Reps are Jean Dunning, Hazel Dale, Heather Davies, Mike Wilson, Gay Wilson, Alison Twinn and Yvonne Roughsedge.

Those present agreed that a sum of £500 immediately available for donation should be divided equally between MHA, All We Can, the Mid Cheshire Samaritans, the Alzheimer's Society and the Runcorn Food Bank.

We also agreed that the recipients of fundraising events in the next financial year will be OPAL, the Salvation Army, Northwich Citizen's Advice Bureau and Christian Aid.

After the meeting we shared Holy Communion and fifteen of us enjoyed lunch together at the Tiger's Head. The next Annual Church Meeting will take place on Sunday 14th May 2023.

Lesley Gough, Church Council Secretary

Good Friday & Easter Day

Andrew Emison led the Good Friday service at the end of Lent, delivering an inspiring and emotional sermon

This was followed 3 days later by the resurrection service on Easter day led by Anne Gibson where the cross had been decorated with chrysanthemums, and afterwards was placed in the church drive as a message for all to see.

The Easter Day service saw the return of flowers in the church, and the resumption of coffee and tea served with crème eggs for Easter. This was very well received



Church Anniversary

This year the 140th anniversary of the current building was celebrated. We were particularly pleased to welcome the District Chair Helen Kirk as our preacher on the occasion.

Spiritual Committee

The Spiritual Committee, which is open to anyone attending Norley Methodist Church, is the group tasked with taking a lead in planning and delivering acts of worship. During the Covid-19 pandemic we had to adapt with on-line worship (thanks to our Minister's technical creativity at Frodsham) and prayer meetings (which met twice per week during October 2020 – August 2021 on Zoom following the daily Office of the Northumbrian Community - <https://www.northumbriacommunity.org>), and of-course Norley@9 which moved to Saturday mornings. With restrictions lifted it is a great joy to be able to meet again in building and enjoy fellowship after morning worship. We are all grateful to Bruce, Lesley and John D and Lewis for their work in keeping us safe.

It is worth noting that the Planning of Worship (done at the Circuit level) has not been without its issues, given the availability of Presbyters and Local Preachers to lead worship. We are able maintain our weekly services going-forward and will seek to have 'congregationally-led' worship from time to time, as we did on Passion Sunday (Lent 5, 3rd April, 2022) – a service enjoyed by all who attended and participated (many thanks to John Bell for compiling/developing the service).

Lent saw the installation of Prayer Stations for Liberation. The Church was open at the start of Lent and each week, one of the themes of liberation was used to drive

our weekly opening liturgy. The weekly context followed the themes of poverty, discrimination (racial, gender, sexuality), the 'innocents' (those suffering from conflict), health and ability/disability, and the planet and those eco-dependent. Week six reflected on ourselves, i.e., we in the developed world who sit 'above' others, and it asked the question 'are we not in need of liberation too'? Good Friday reflected on our service to others and Easter Sunday on humanity's universal need for salvation, signposting faith in Jesus Christ as the means of redemption, culminating in the Prayer for Self-Liberation reproduced below.

Also, we have continued our 'Food for Thought' meetings which have enable us to share our views and opinions on faith-related matters. Food for Thought is taking a Summer break but will return in September.

Michael Gough

Solar Panels Update

The excellent weather in the last quarter means we have generated 953 Kwh saving nearly a ton of CO₂ generation from coal, and have received a cheque for almost £550 for our funds. The total receipts in 10¼ years amount to over £17,350 and we have generated over 34,000 Kwh.

Bruce

Property Matters

Since the last Outreach, the property team have completed one more of the 6 agreed projects for this connexional year. The new LED light was fitted in the kitchen corridor and the new sockets installed for the AV system. This only leaves the repairs to the Sunday School ceiling and its redecoration to be tackled.

As ever, new issues arise. The resumption of refreshments led to the realization that the dishwasher was not working properly, and a call out revealed the pump was not pumping which was **easily fixed – so now we have a dishwasher again.**

The hot water supply to the kitchen taps, isolated during the pandemic to avoid tripping half the church circuits, turned out to be irreparable, and 2 in line heaters were purchased to replace them. We hope to fit these in early June.

Rotten wood was discovered in the end of a purlin supporting the kitchen ceiling, only visible now the ivy had been removed from the wall in the neighbour's garden, and a repair organized to be carried out hopefully by the time you read this.

The high street side floodlight bulb replacement was successful as reported last time but the illumination when on is sporadic, indicating a loose connection somewhere in the wiring which will need to be addressed.

We are grateful to John and Lewis for replacing a gutter above the side door which blew down in the Spring storms and replacing the hedgehog on the High Street side in the gutters – observing that the hedgehogs were doing a wonderful job at keeping the gutters clear of leaves.

There has been progress with obtaining a quote for the exterior redecoration of the church, scheduled for August 2023, but second and third quotes are awaited.

Bruce 8/05/2022

Financial Report

This time it's very brief but still important – to report that from the end of February until and including the Annual Church Meeting on May 8th, donations have been made of £87 to the West Cheshire foodbank (in addition to provisions given), £50 to the Macmillan Hospice (they supplied the flowers for Mothering Sunday), £175 to the Methodist Church World Mission Fund (the annual Easter Offering appeal), £1000 to the Ukraine Relief appeal (channelled via All We Can, the Methodist charity formerly known as MRDF) and £100 each to MHA (Methodist Homes), All We Can, Mid-Cheshire Samaritans, the Alzheimers' Society and the Runcorn District foodbank.

This is the splendid total of £1812 for which all the beneficiaries will be extremely grateful. Expressions of appreciation for the generosity of the Norley congregation are always published in the weekly notice-sheet and I'm pleased to reiterate them here too. Many thanks indeed to you all.

All donations include gift-aid where possible, which will be reclaimed from HMRC.

John Bell, treasurer

The Church Leadership Team met on 13 April and

Noted that the Wednesday Club had restarted with 20-25 attending but decided to leave any resumption of Open Door lunches until covid Levels subsided.

Confirmed the Covid Road map as approved at Church Council to re-introduce refreshments and flowers weekly on Easter Sunday, with wrapped biscuits at refreshments.

Agreed arrangements for Easter, the Church Anniversary, and the Annual Church Meeting.

Decided on arrangements to cover Andrew's sabbatical from May 15, which includes a notebook in the vestry to be filled in weekly by the Vestry Stewards from May 15 to the end of August.

Decided not to restart the collecting of names of those attending services requested by the pastoral committee but just to record the numbers attending.

Updated on the property projects and suggested additions.

Discussed the broadening of Andrew's role in September to include The Hurst and Blakelees and initiated actions to set up a joint CLT meeting of Norley and The Hurst.

Agreed and confirmed by email subsequently that from June 1 there would be 2 Vestry Stewards and 1 or 2 Welcome Stewards and agreed their duties.

Bruce

Some interesting background to the Trussell Trust which is the Christian charity operating many of the foodbanks, including the local ones in Cheshire...

The story of the Trussell Trust

Carol and Paddy Henderson founded the Trussell Trust in 1997 based on a legacy left by Carol's mother, Betty Trussell.

The Trussell Trust's initial Bulgaria projects focused on improving conditions for the 60+ children sleeping at Central Railway Station in Bulgaria. In 2000, Paddy received a call from a mother in Salisbury, who was struggling to afford food and faced sending her children to bed hungry.

Paddy investigated data on poverty and deprivation in the UK and found that significant numbers of people faced going hungry as a result of a sudden crisis. So, Paddy started the Salisbury Foodbank in his garden shed and garage, providing three days' emergency food to local people in crisis.

The food bank model spread rapidly through church networks and, in particular, inspiration was drawn from a verse from Matthew's gospel in the Bible which reads: *"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was in prison and you visited me."* (Matthew 25:35-36)

Network of food banks

More than twenty years later, the Trussell Trust supports a network of over 1200 foodbanks across the UK, supported by thousands of volunteers. Each provides emergency food to people in crisis, and additional support to help tackle the root causes that sweep people into poverty and build people's resilience, so they are less likely to need a food bank in the future.

It takes more than food to end hunger, so the Trussell Trust brings together the experiences of food banks in their network, and their communities, to challenge the structural economic issues that lock people in poverty, and campaign for change to end hunger and poverty in the UK so that food banks can be resigned to the history books.

Latest news

New figures released a couple of weeks ago reveal food banks in the Trussell Trust's network provided more than 2.1 million parcels to people facing financial hardship across the country, from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

This represents a 14% increase compared to the same period in 2019/20 – before the pandemic – as more and more people are unable to afford the absolute essentials that we all need to eat, stay warm, dry and clean. Alarmingly, more than 830,000 parcels were provided for children, representing a 15% increase from 2019/20 when 720,000 were provided.

Your continued monetary donations and gifts of food are always greatly appreciated. For those who wish to donate food, these items are in short supply at the present time: UHT milk and juice, cereal bars, tinned fruit, puddings, small jars of instant coffee, instant mash, tinned potatoes, sweet treats, crisps, instant pasta, instant noodles, tinned meat and fish.

Thank you for your continued support!

Michael and Lesley Gough

IN MEMORIAM Ruth Elizabeth Howarth

22 October 1932 – 17 February 2022



Ruth was born in Brampton in Cumbria in 1936, one of 5 children and after that early start up near Hadrian's wall the family moved to Rochdale while she was still young.

Ruth and Roy (her husband to be) met at work. Roy heard someone whistling and went to find out who it was. On seeing Ruth, he asked her out on a date - the date went so well he asked her to marry him, and they were engaged within a week. They remained married for almost 49 years until Roy passed away in 2005.

They began their married life in Denton near Manchester where, in 1958, Mark was born. They moved to Hyde in Cheshire where Martin was born in 1961 followed by Fiona in 1965.

The children settled into local schools and when they were old enough Ruth went back to work ... in the housing department of Tameside Council.

Sadly, tragedy struck in the late seventies when their house was almost totally destroyed by fire. Thankfully, one of Roy's bosses at the time had a rental property in nearby Marple which he gladly let them use while their house was rebuilt.

When all the children had left home, Ruth and Roy retired and were planning to travel the country living in their caravan but after the first winter they sensibly abandoned this idea and bought a park home in rural Norley. After Roy had passed away Ruth decided to be nearer a town, and she moved to Helsby.

Ruth took the opportunity to become actively involved with Norley Methodist Church and made many new friends in this community, including Roy Wood who would become a very dear friend until he passed away just over 12 months ago.

After an accident at home she, with the help of the family, decided that it would make sense to move into a Care Home where she had company and was supported by the excellent caring staff at Hillcrest in Frodsham.

What will I remember about Mum from Mark

She was a wonderful human being and always had time for her 3 "kids" ... meals were always on the table at the same time, we never went to school "scruffy" and, despite not always having a lot of money, we were always treated very well at Christmas and birthdays.

In spite of the fact that Ruth had brought up 3 "half decent" children, that was in the past. When she looked after grand-daughter Lyndsey things were never straightforward ... like the time she was changing her nappy – one of the disposable ones – and she put it on Lyndsey the wrong way round and taped it to her skin rather than itself ... no wonder Lyndsey was agitated when it had to come off !!

What will I remember about Mum from Martin

I remember her telling me that her first job was in a room full of women speaking on the phone and plugging long wires into sockets - a telephone operator. This room full of women has nowadays been replaced - the job is now done by a microchip the size of a fingernail.

Later in her career, as Tameside Housing Officer, I remember she used to get bribes and kickbacks from the very deserving families to nudge them up towards the top of the list. Of course, Ruth just passed these gifts on and as a result her daughter Fiona sometimes got huge teddy bears for Christmas - a perk of the job.

I remember when Ruth had gone for an eye test including examining the retina at the back of the eye, Ruth told me they had noticed a problem with "immaculate conception"...

Later we looked it up and found that what she meant to say was macular degeneration, a common problem with sight as you get older.

Whenever any of her 3 children were having problems and causing anxiety for her or Roy, she would always shake her head and say

"You don't have them to make you laugh and you don't have them to make you cry". It's an odd way of putting it but I think I know what she was referring to as my children grow older - to me this has become well-known as part of Grandma Ruth's "life knowledge".

When the 3 of us left home to start families of our own and sometimes couldn't get back home to visit her as often as we would like, she would always say

"Well, you have your own lives" - more life wisdom which would be useful advice for lots of parents.

This is in addition to lots of Grandma "special words" - her very own vocabulary. My favourites were :-

"Mardy" - someone who was easily frightened or who did a lot of whimpering

"Scriker" - a child who cries easily (and a lot) - she always said that described her second son, Martin, when he was very young

"He was a breech birth" once again often mentioned in the context of her second son, Martin, who "came out bum-first"

A definite liking for Barley Wine, a very strong 9% beer.

What will I remember about Mum from Fiona

Her soft hands and pretty nails, her love of singing (especially Perry Como and Frank Sinatra); her generosity and kindness; her playing football with Ollie and Angus in the garden; her love of Ollie's curly hair never having wanted the straight hair she had; her thinking Angus was a strange name until she met him and then saying 'actually he looks like an Angus'; and the countless number of times she told him how his mum (Fiona) had blonde hair like his when she was young; baking Christmas cakes with her every year; how she loved the sweet peas my dad grew in the garden; her lovely handwriting; her fantastic gravy with Sunday roast and Christmas dinner; her disastrous attempts at homebrewing wine and beer; and the excitement we shared when we went to buy my wedding dress. Most of all Mum was the kindest person and loveliest Mum I could have ever wished for; I miss her more than I would ever have imagined.

Words about grandma from Lyndsey

When I was young, grandma loved to come and stay with us (with grandad of course) and they would take me out for a walk in my buggy. Mum and Dad would challenge them that they had bought me a meat & potato pie which they always denied ... despite the evidence of pastry crumbs and splashes of gravy on my clothes!!

When I introduced her to David for the first time, she started flirting with him until she found out he was 27 years old and she then claimed "he was too old".

Words about grandma from Ollie

One of my fondest (and funniest) memories of Grandma was when I was around the age of ten. I found a watch on the beach and sold it to her for 10 pounds. I then proceeded to blackmail for 5 pounds if the watch was still working when we next met. By the time it had finally broken I had amassed a small fortune. Another fond memory was whenever we met, she would insist on treating me at Toys R Us, which she quickly regretted after realising how chaotic a shop it was filled with screaming children. I always have fond memories of grandma and will miss her.

Words about grandma from Angus

I remember Grandma with her caravan and her little yellow car with all cuddly toys in the back window, her kindness whenever we saw her no matter what her mood. She was Grandma, she was the best.

Words about grandma from Tom

I remember seeing her in her park home, with Mark, Jane, and Grandma, although I can't remember exactly who was there.

I was really thirsty and remember drinking some water in a glass - but after a mouthful I realised it was vodka!

We will miss grandma and celebrate all the great times we had with her.

Words about grandma from Cicely

A fond memory is of Ruth making dinner - a lovely Spag Bol (as we call it) for Ollie, Angus, Tom and I when our families met up.

My dad Martin always tries to make a Spag Bol as good as Ruth's, but despite years of effort has never quite made it as well !