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Dear Friends,

I was away and missed the deadline for our Outreach Magazine in September. This is just typical of my discipleship of Jesus Christ. I try to do things well but end up fluffing things left right and centre.

Fortunately I am seeking to follow the God that we know in Jesus Christ. God seems to get a kick out of choosing to work with people like me who get things wrong all the time. Sometimes I “go off on one”. (Some would say I do this every time I preach). I get caught up with my own prejudices and perspectives. In doing so I fail to notice God’s presence in every part of my life and experience.

That’s why I need the church.

I need to be part of the church of Jesus Christ (of whatever denomination) in order to be part of what St. Paul calls “the body of Christ”. It is together that we discern what God is like and what God is calling us to be.

Having a new minister is one opportunity to take stock of our own discipleship. Perhaps those of you reading this letter might also like to take the opportunity to pause and reflect. Could this be a time for you to respond in a new way to God’s call and claim upon your life?

- Do any of you have a sense deep down that God is calling you to something new but perhaps you’ve been putting it off? To you may I suggest, from my own experience, God will not go away! (Psalm 139:7)
- Do any of you have a sense that God is calling you but you feel that somehow you are not qualified? To you may I suggest that God seems to get a kick out of calling numpties. (I offer myself as a case in point). If you think about it, so many of the characters in the bible were too young or too old or their face “didn’t fit”. It has been my experience that if God calls, he also equips. (1 Corinthians 1:26-29).
- Are any of you reading this newsletter at home and for whatever reason coming to church is no longer part of your routine? To you may I say that you will always be welcome, not because we need people to fill rotas, but because like you we all need God and because we need you. You are always welcome.
- Are you reading this newsletter at home but are not able to be with us because of infirmity, ill-health or because of other commitments? I would love the opportunity to talk to you about how we can come alongside of you in your life.
- Are you feeling that you want to know more about the faith, about Jesus, about the bible or you want to “go deeper”? Please be assured that even those of us who have been Christians for donkey’s years often find that we want a refresher or would like to step back and see the big picture of the Bible.
- Have you been amongst us for years and you’ve never taken the step of becoming a church member? Could this be the time when you say “Yes”? This is not about trying to pin the label “Methodist” on you or to sucker you in to institutional church but rather to accept God’s offer to join his universe-wide movement.

If any of you ever want to talk about any aspect of our faith, of being a disciple, of following Jesus, of your sense of call and vocation, please know that there is nothing I love to do more and that I am *never* too busy for a black coffee with no sugar!

It’s my privilege to join you as together we explore God’s plan for our life together.

Grace and peace, Andrew.

Craft Club News

What's the common factor between the sound of clicking needles, laughter and chat? Obviously it's the Tuesday Craft Club where the members have an enjoyable time and show a real concern for each other.

Also the club has a wish to use their skills for the benefit of others. In the past seven or eight years they have supported the Petty Pool Trust and have raised well over £4,000. Other charities supported in the last couple of years include St. Luke's Hospice, Air Ambulance, Orchard Manor Care Home, Salvation Army, Alzheimer's, and the Liverpool Heart and Chest hospital.

In October we had a lovely outing to Notcutt's garden centre near Widnes to meet up with June Fay who moved recently to Widnes to live near her family. It was great to see her. Now we are looking forward to Christmas lunch at the Plough Inn. *Alison*

Pastoral Piece

Can you believe it!!! The beautiful summer we had is gone, gone, gone. We are already reminded in October that Christmas is coming. The shops start filling up with Christmas items.

Autumn is all around us - the trees displaying the beautiful shades of gold and yellow and leaves falling everywhere. Winter woolens are now required to keep us warm when venturing outside.

Our team of Pastoral Visitors hope you all have a peaceful and happy Christmas. We are always available if needed.

A dream in your Heart (words by Iris Hesseldon)

*Keep a dream in your heart and you'll never be old.
Let the wonder of childhood enrich and enfold.
Let the Spirit of Christmas refresh and renew
And the promise of New Year be hopeful for you.*

*Remember the rainbow when storm clouds appear
And seek the first star when evening is near.
Though years are relentless just let them unfold
Keep a dream in your heart and you'll never be old.*

I sincerely hope that you and yours have a truly Happy Christmas.

With every good wish for New Year.

Margaret Hogan 788960

October Church Council

We welcomed Rev'd Andrew Emison as Chair for our Church Council meeting on the 9th October. It was a busy agenda with updates from the Treasurer, Property Steward, Spiritual & Pastoral committees as well as updates and discussion around a range of activities within the Church.

Some key topics from the meeting were:

- From John's report as Treasurer, it was interesting to note the proportion of our annual Church income which we give away to good causes – around 10% of our total income.

This is a significant achievement and thanks are given to all who contribute. In particular the contribution made by the Craft Club was noted and is greatly appreciated.

- Alongside numerous tasks completed as Property Steward, Bruce continues to ensure that the considerable amount of documentation required related to the Church property is completed and kept up to date. He is currently pursuing a compensation claim on our behalf, for the malfunctioning of the solar panels during the Summer heatwave.
- We had a useful conversation about the future of carol singing and a possible alternative activity. As a result, the Council agreed that this year we will try something different – an evening of ‘Singing around the Christmas Tree’ with refreshments at the Church. This will be held on 19th December and we hope that many of our friends in and around the Village, who we have visited in previous years will join us for a festive musical evening.
- The playing of music during communion had been discussed previously by the Spiritual committee. After some further discussion, the Council agreed to support the Spiritual Committee’s recommendation that we will alternate music and ‘quiet’ during communion services – as some members of the congregation enjoy music and some prefer ‘quiet’.
- A number of key forthcoming dates and activities were noted including planning for next year’s Church Anniversary, when Rev’d David Emison (Andrew’s father) has agreed to lead worship.
- Margaret reported that the pastoral visitors have held an initial meeting with Andrew and they are looking forward to working together.
- Very sadly, this was the last Church Council meeting for Andrea who would be leaving her role as Family Worker at the end of October. The Council expressed their thanks to Andrea for all her work, particularly in Norley School and for the activities she has organised over the years to develop links between our Church and families in Norley. Andrew has established links with the school and we agreed that we will have a further discussion over the next few months about our outreach activities into the local community, and the support needed.

Lesley Gough Acting Church Secretary

First Wednesday Walks

September’s walk was led by Peter and Sheila and was a 3 ½ mile gentle stroll round Alyn Waters Country Park, Wrexham. The park is in two separate sections, on either side of the Afon Alyn. We parked at the visitor centre in the eastern (Gwersyllt) side of the park, near to Cefn y Bedd and walked on well surfaced paths past the Skylark meadow (but there were no skylarks), inspecting the various exhibits on the sculpture trail as we went. Descending on a fairly steep but surfaced path through woodland, we left the Western section of the park and crossed the Afon Alyn at Bradley Mill.

From here we followed a short but steep country lane up the hill to enter the Eastern (Llay) half of the park. This half is largely flat. We followed a mixture of paved and unpaved paths through both open parkland and wood in a loop, stopping for the habitual coffee break half way round, before returning down the steep road to the bridge, where Richard was fortunate to spot a Dipper in the river. Re-entering the Western half, we followed the Alyn upstream for half a mile before

taking a gradual ascent back to the Visitor Centre. Lunch at the Holly Bush in Cefn y Bedd concluded an enjoyable day.

Peter Hills

Nine participants took part in October's walk which was supposed to be a straightforward amble from Chapel to Acton Bridge. Sometimes things don't turn out to be plain sailing.

Led by Vaughan, the group headed off through the village into Cow Lane, then down Moss Lane and onto the path at the corner. It was here our leader noticed that her numbers had already dropped from 9 to 6. Retracing their steps the missing three were found chasing an escaped goat, a well-known escapee which regularly tours the area looking for entertainment; who decided being chased by three septuagenarians would have to do. Eventually, the goat's freedom curtailed, if only temporarily, the elated team regrouped and set out once again across the fields to the farm/nursery on Wood's Lane only to find the public footpath impeded by a flock of sheep penned between two gates.

After their initial success with the goat a flock of sheep was just a small challenge to our stalwart members except he who opened the first gate did so with gay abandon and to the dismay of the leader, who had thoughts of terminating the walk there and then, a delighted escapee sheep went one way and ramblers hastily the other.

Walking past Ruloe the group headed across the fields towards Onston, at least that was the general idea! However in the third field the route was impeded by an electric fence enclosing a herd of cows. The leader had been assured by the farmers that there would be a route around, but now displaced from the actual footpath confusion reigned until the decision was made to limbo dance under the electric fence to join the lively heifers. Then aided by Richard's very welcome sat nav they relocated their intended path to emerge in Onston Lane.

Reassured that she would not be asked to lead another walk, and singing 'Old MacDonald....' to herself (thankfully!), our leader took the group across the fields, over the railway to Cliff Road and down the meadows, where disappointingly there was no excitement at all, to the swing bridge near the Leigh Arms. Pre-positioned cars awaiting, our adventurers made their way to the Holly Bush where a well-deserved and wholesome meal was partaken.

Garry Wynne

November's walk was to see something of the deer rut at Dunham Massey Park. As the rut normally finishes early in November the walk was brought forward to the last Wednesday in October. There were 18 of us who took part. It was lovely to have some younger folk joining us who brought the average age down considerably (it was school half term)!

We strolled around the park on a beautiful autumn day for almost 2 hours but travelled less than 2 miles, stopping many times to see the deer. Although there was not a lot of exciting action we had many good views of bucks, does and fawns including some very close sightings of resting bucks recovering from all their endeavours. These were all seen against the backdrop of the wonderful rustic autumnal colours of the pasture woodland. Hopefully some good photographs were obtained.

Altogether a pleasant morning after which we withdrew to the Axe and Cleaver for lunch.

Richard Ramsbottom.

Future walks are planned for

Wednesday December 5th

Wednesday January 2nd

Wednesday February 6th

The December walk will be around Cuddington and parts of the Whitegate Way with lunch at the White Barn followed by tea & mince pies at 6 Leawood Close.

Meet at church at 9.45 for a 10.00 am departure each month – we hope to see you there.

Bruce

Family Worker Report

For just over nine years I have been your family worker. Over this time, we have taken the message of Jesus and God's love to the children in Norley and surrounding area through holiday clubs, cookery clubs, after school clubs and Norley@9.

Each week I have led assemblies at Norley school and run a lunch time club. We have explored many themes over the years, enjoyed games, been involved in drama and learnt new songs. The children have explored the meaning of the Lord's prayer, Easter and Fruits of the Spirit plus others through many prayer stations on our prayer days.

Connecting with other youths from other churches, the youth at Norley have been involved in weekends away, and film and discussion evenings.

Now I am moving on to other fields of work and I wish everyone at Norley a future where you continue to discover God's love and mission.

Thank you for your help, teamwork and love over these years.

God Bless

Andrea

The Choir at Norley

*"In the turning of the seasons
Harvest time is here again"*

The choir sang the above words during the morning worship at the Harvest festival service at Norley church on 30th of September. The beautiful words of the hymn were written by Avis Palmer, set to the tune of Beethoven's "Ode to Joy." Our thanks to Avis for allowing us to use her hymn at the service.

The choir sang with the understanding of the sustained nature of the melody intended. As such they were accompanied on the organ.

The members have started rehearsing for the carol service to be held on the 23rd of December. Also as requested, they will be rehearsing the "Norley specials" for the forthcoming Big Sing on the 19th of December.

I appreciate their sense of commitment. We are delighted that Jean has joined us. We continue to enjoy good fellowship.

Saro Jesudason.

Shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child

Shoebox Saturday on 27th October saw wonderful donations from many people and a large number of shoeboxes were filled, More arrived after the excitement was over (from Shelley), and these were received at the service the next morning, along with others brought by members of the congregation. Last year we managed to send an incredible 40 boxes. Would we reach anywhere near last year's record? Well we exceeded it - and in addition money was gift aided to the Church which enabled £150 to be sent with the shoeboxes towards the transport costs. Michael Gough took the boxes to the depot and reports

Picture Michael Gough

"Sunday 28th October a total of 44 Shoe Boxes were received at Norley Methodist Church in aid of Operation Christmas Child (run by Samaritan's Purse). We cannot know the recipients of these gifts but we pray that they will bring a little joy to the children who will receive them this Christmas".

Harvest 2018

Many willing helpers and advice-givers created the beautiful displays shown in church.

At the Sunday morning service many generous donations for the West Cheshire Foodbank were received. The total amount donated came to 126kg exceeding even last year's amazing total of 103Kg, which is a "wonderfully generous contribution". The Food Bank Team wish to say a "huge thank you" for our continued support .

The Church Weekend Away

This year the Church Weekend was at Abbot Hall near Grange-Over-Sands. This is a lovely place only a few minutes' walk from the sea and with good facilities. Unfortunately the property has been sold so we shall not be going there again.

Our weekend arrangements followed the usual pattern leaving plenty of time for people to follow their own interests i.e. swimming in the pool, strolling along by the sea, sitting in the sun (which was possible this year as the weather was very good), visiting the delightful town of Cartmel, and generally socialising.

On Saturday afternoon Bruce lead a walk for the more energetic and adventurous members and had a good following. On Saturday evening we entertained each other with contributions of anecdotes, poems etc. Lewis and Oliver gave a film show of their three peaks climbs which were truly amazing!

Friday and Saturday epilogues were taken by Yvonne and Alison and Saturday prologue was taken by Philip. Sunday morning communion was taken by Rev. Andrew Emison. We were delighted that Andrew, his wife Naomi and their children Matthew and Sophie could come with us and thank them very much indeed.

Altogether, we had an excellent weekend.

Alison Twinn

Diary

Unless otherwise stated in the notices the following group meets weekly at Norley

Craft Club Tuesdays 10.00am – noon in the Norley Open Door Room

December 2018

Saturday	1 st	10.30am	Hoole Christmas Tree Festival (until 4.00pm)
Advent Sunday	2 nd	10.45am	Rev'd Andrew Emison - Sacrament
		12.30pm	Hoole Christmas Tree Festival (until 3.30pm)
		6.30pm	No service at Norley
Monday	3 rd	4.00pm	Kelsall Messy Church
Wednesday	5 th	9.45am	First Wednesday Walk - Cuddington
Thursday	6 th	4.30pm	The Hurst Kingsley Messy Church
Friday 7 th – Sunday 9 th			Frodsham Christmas Tree Festival. Friday 3.30pm – 6pm, Saturday 10am – 4pm, Sunday 12 – 4pm followed by a celebration service
Saturday	8 th	10.00am	Decorate the Church for Christmas
Sunday (Advent 2)	9 th	10.45am	Mr Philip Garner of Norley
		6.30pm	No Service at Norley
Monday	10 th	12 noon	The Hurst Soup Lunch in aid of Royal Star and Garter Homes
Thursday	13 th	12 noon	Open Door Room Christmas Lunch
		7.30pm	Tarvin Christmas Praise Evening with the Salvation Army
Saturday	15 th	10.00am	The Hurst "Too Busy to Stop?" Day (until 6pm)
Sunday (Advent 3)	16 th	9.00am	Norley@9
		10.45am	Mrs Elizabeth Holmes of Frodsham
		12.30pm	Hoole Christmas Tree Festival (until 3.30pm)
		6.30pm	Rev'd Andrew Emison - Sacrament
Wednesday	19 th	5.00pm	Tarvin Messy Church
		6.00pm	Singing around the Tree & refreshments (until 8pm)
Sunday (Advent 4)	23 rd	10.45am	Mr Edgar Gregory of Frodsham
		4.00pm	Rev'd Andrew Emison – Candlelit Carol Service
Christmas Eve	24 th	4.00pm	The Hurst Christingle Service with Janet Batey
		11.15pm	The Hurst Midnight Communion with Rev'd David Bintliff
Christmas Day	25 th	9.30am	Rev'd Andrew Emison
		10.30am	Frodsham Family Worship with Rev'd Andrew Emison
Sunday	30 th	10.45am	Mr John Bell of Cuddington

6.30pm No Service at Norley
 6.30pm Blakelees - Christmas songs of praise
 led by John and Joan Bell & followed by refreshments

January 2019

Wednesday 2nd 9.45am First Wednesday Walk
 Sunday 6th 10.45am Mr Mike Ridley of Bunbury
 6.30pm No Service at Norley
 Monday 7th 4.00pm Kelsall Messy Church
 Thursday 10th 4.30pm The Hurst Kingsley Messy Church
 Sunday 13th 10.45am Rev'd Andrew Emison - Covenant Service - Sacrament
 6.30pm No Service at Norley
 Monday 14th 12 noon The Hurst Soup Lunch in aid of "Womankind"
 Tuesday 15th 7.30pm Church Leadership Meeting at Howell Croft

January 2019 (continued)

Wednesday 16th 5.00pm Tarvin Messy Church
 7.30pm Café Church
 Thursday 17th 7.30pm Local Preachers' meeting at Helsby
 Sunday 20th 9.00am Norley@9
 10.45am Rev'd Claire Heald of Chester
 6.30pm Rev'd Andrew Emison - Sacrament
 Friday 25th 8.30pm TGIF (Thanks God it's Friday) circuit service at Helsby
 Meal followed by 7.30pm service
 Sunday 27th 10.45am Mrs Avis Palmer of Tarvin
 6.30pm No Service at Norley

February 2019

Sunday 3rd 10.45am Miss Heather Rowland of Ashton
 6.30pm No Service at Norley
 Monday 4th 4.00pm Kelsall Messy Church
 Wednesday 6th 9.45am First Wednesday Walk
 Thursday 7th 4.30pm The Hurst Kingsley Messy Church
 Sunday 10th 10.45am Rev'd Andrew Emison - Sacrament
 6.30pm No service at Norley
 Monday 11th 12 noon The Hurst Soup Lunch – Warrington and Halton Hospitals
 Wednesday 13th 12 noon Open Door Room Lunch
 Sunday 17th 9.00am Norley@9
 10.45am Local Arrangements will be made nearer the time

		6.30pm	Rev'd Andrew Emison - Sacramento
Wednesday	20 th	5.00pm	Tarvin Messy Church
		7.30pm	Café Church
Sunday	24 th	10.45am	Mr Mike Ridley of Bunbury
		10.45am	Oakmere Anniversary – Mr Andrew Ellams
		6.30pm	Rev'd Sue Levitt - Sacramento
Wednesday	27 th	2.30pm	Oakmere Anniversary - Rev'd Andrew Emison followed by tea
Thursday	28 th	12 noon	Open Door Room Lunch
		1.15pm	Thursday Club

March 2018

Wednesday	6 th	9.45am	First Wednesday Walk
Wednesday	13 th	12 noon	Open Door Room Lunch
Sunday	17 th	9.00am	Norley@9
Wednesday	20 th	7.30pm	Café Church
Thursday	28 th	12 noon	Open Door Room Lunch
		1.15pm	Thursday Club

Solar Panels Update

I read the meter in April 2018 and received our payment, bringing the total received to £10,750 so far.

To my surprise when I read the meter in September the reading was exactly the same as that in April, despite the wonderfully sunny summer we had had. We had generated no electricity!

Investigation revealed that the inverter that turns the DC generated by the panels into AC that can be fed into the grid had failed. Fortunately it was within the 10 year warrantee period and has now been replaced free of charge, and the system is generating electricity again. We will be compensated for the electricity we would have generated between us informing the company and they replacing the inverter (about £80) but not for the £500+ we would have received from generation over the summer. Checking more often would help!

Bruce

Spiritual Committee

The clocks have been put back, the mornings are lighter for a while and the evenings darker (as someone put it, 'it gets late soon'): Autumn is upon us, the frosty fields glint in the sun until the

seemingly white-painted shadows give way to expose the brightened green of the grass and it's another lovely morning. Or maybe it's just pouring down, grey, dull, and winter beckons - so does Advent, the beginning of another Christian year. It hardly seems twelve months since we were here last time.

September saw the appointment of the Revd Andrew Emison as our minister: although no stranger, we were delighted to welcome him among us, not least to lead worship. The monthly pattern of Sunday services, including Holy Communion, will vary in order to accommodate Andrew's other commitments in Frodsham, Oakmere and Bunbury/Tiverton – so you are encouraged to check the Plan and weekly notice-sheet for details.

Evening services just once a month began in September, with occasional special services added. We have celebrated the Harvest Festival, brought shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child and paused in solemn Remembrance at 11 am on the 11th day of the 11th month, poignantly the moment 100 years on since arms were laid down at the end of the First World War. We have also marked All Saints Day, November 1st, the day when we give thanks for the lives of all the saints who don't have a day of their own. Then, on the last Sunday in November, the feast of Christ the King, ascended in glory, before we begin the cycle again and anticipate his coming and so into Advent once more.

The Spiritual Committee recommended and the Church Council agreed that, in order to meet differing congregational wishes during services of Holy Communion, we would alternate between silence and quiet background music during the distribution of the bread and wine, varying mornings and evenings. This will give two silent and two musical each month, one morning and one evening.

And, an advance notice – our Church Anniversary morning service on April 28th 2019 will be led by the Revd David Emison, Andrew's father – but more about him next time!

John Bell – Chair of Spiritual Committee

SERVICES OVER CHRISTMAS

In addition to Advent liturgy, worship and Holy Communion, we shall sing carols at church – in the garden around the lit Christmas Tree unless the weather is too awful – and serve seasonal refreshments on December 19th (from 6 pm until 8 pm), hold our Candlelit Carol Service at 4 pm on December 23rd, and celebrate the birth of Jesus on Christmas Day with a service led by Andrew starting at 9.30.

Andrew will also lead our annual Covenant Service at 10.45 am on January 13th. All details of the services are on the Preaching Plan.

The offering on Christmas Day will go to 'All We Can', formerly MRDF, the Methodist relief and development charity: special envelopes will be available and donations can be gift-aided.

NORLEY @ 9

Norley@9 will meet on the 3rd Sunday mornings at 9 am prepared and led by the usual team.

CAFE CHURCH

Café Church will take a break in December and resume its convivial, and sometimes controversial conversations on January 16th and February 20th.

OPEN DOOR LUNCHES

Plans are now well advanced for our Christmas Lunch on
Thursday December 13th

If you have not already signed to say you will be joining us please do tell Joan (01606 301198) or Alison (01829 741658) as soon as possible and no later than Sunday December 9th. As ever lunch will be served at 12 noon. This is always a most enjoyable time together and we are all really looking forward to it.

As a change from normal there will be no Open Door lunches in January next year, but we shall return in February when hopefully the weather will be better.

Our dates are:

Wednesday February 13th
Thursday February 28th
Wednesday March 13th
Thursday March 28th.

We wish everyone a very Happy Christmas, a healthy 2019 and many more enjoyable lunches.

Joan Bell

THURSDAY CLUB

An invitation to you to come to the THURSDAY CLUB

February 28th

March 28th

1.15pm to 2.30pm in the Open Door Room

Norley Methodist Church

PLEASE COME AND HELP DECORATE THE CHURCH FOR CHRISTMAS

SATURDAY 8th DECEMBER 10:00am

The Church Weekend Away in 2019

The Church weekend away in 2019 will be at Beth Eden Christian Guest House in Llandudno from Friday 2 October to Sunday 4 October. Put the dates in your diaries **NOW**,

Booking forms will be available from mid-January from the porch. Bruce would like your deposits and booking forms by the end of February.

The Emison Family

I have been asked to write a short piece about my family. Naomi, Matthew, Sophie and I are very grateful for the warm welcome that we have received as I have taken up my work at Norley Methodist Church. We all very much enjoyed our church family weekend in Cumbria at the beginning of October.

As a family we have learned something about the “moving on”. Naomi and I are both children of Methodist ministers. As we were growing up it was unusual to move not just from place to place but to very different sorts of homes. Between us we have experienced market towns, industrial towns, inner-city, suburbs and semi-rural homes. For the last two years we have lived in Frodsham having served in my first appointment as a Methodist Minister in the north of the Isle of Man. Prior to that we lived in Durham for two years for my ministerial training following 13 years in Reading, Berkshire where I worked as a software development manager in the defence, digital television and mobile telecoms sectors.

One of the things that I loved most about my training in Durham was the fact that I trained alongside other Methodists but also those training for Anglican ministry. We all agreed that we had more fun being together than apart and we made a covenant in which we promised that we would seek to work with Anglican or Methodist colleagues respectively. I am excited by the opportunity to work with sisters and brothers at St. John’s and any other Christians in Norley as we seek in our two fellowships to truly be the one church of Jesus Christ in our village.

I am currently minister at Norley, Bunbury, Tiverton, Oakmere and Frodsham.

Naomi is a primary school teacher and now works as early-years coordinator at Mickle Trafford school and takes responsibility for music, RE and global learning. Everywhere we have lived head teachers, governors and parents all tell that Naomi is a brilliant classroom practitioner.

Matthew is 14 and has embarked on his GCSEs. He enjoys guitar, mountain biking and computer games.

Sophie is 12 and is learning to play piano and violin. (They get their musical talents from their mum!)

Andrew

Financials Matter

Indeed, they do! Maybe not the most important aspect of the life of a church, but we need to keep proper accounts and be solvent – and we tick both boxes. The October Church Council received and adopted the accounts and reports for the year 2017-18, with very grateful thanks to Richard Ramsbottom who, once again, examined and signed them off as a true and accurate record of our financial affairs.

Income of £26,571 and expenditure of £28,101 gave a deficit in the year of £1,530 which was wholly due to the gift-aid refund on small cash donations, of about £1,800, not being received before August 31st as expected. Otherwise, we would have recorded a small surplus. Enquiries of the Finance officers in Methodist Church House, London, who process the claims from HMRC on our behalf, advise that this may become the common pattern. We don't lose money – we just wait longer to receive it and it arrives in the following Methodist year. The income lost from not being able to hold a Safari Supper was more than made up by the generosity of Hazel and James Dale and their friends in celebrating their golden wedding and giving £1,705. In addition the Sunday morning refreshment donations raised £439, the Christmas Tree Festival generated £840 surplus and Open Door lunches contributed a magnificent £1045. Sunday collections were sustained at £14,401 and we were most grateful for many other donations. On the down side, the solar panels converting equipment failure meant that we lost an expected income of £500 or so before the end of August.

On the expenditure side, the new church lighting cost £2,000, and, taken overall, other costs were within budgets. The second and final part of the loan from the District (£1,250) was repaid in March, so the church is now free of debt.

Donations totalling £2,141 were made from the Church Council, the Annual Church Meeting and through specific events and collections, as follows: Englesea Brook Chapel and Museum £100, Connexional Fund for the Support of Presbyters and Deacons £100, Connexional Property Fund £100, Tarn Taran (a charity in India) £200, Marie Curie Foundation £150, Barnabus (a homelessness charity in Manchester) £150, Norley News £100, Petty Pool £130, Samaritans Purse (Christmas shoeboxes) £165, World Church Easter Offering £187.50, MHA £130, Action for Children £87 and Christian Aid £541.50. It noted that the Craft Club also made donations from their own funds to external charities of £633, including a further £470 to Petty Pool. Thus, a total of £2,774 was contributed to charitable causes outside Norley Methodist Church – which is near enough 10% of our income. This is a splendid achievement.

As previously reported, we continue to build up an adequate reserve to cover the external decoration of the church buildings which will cost between £4000 and £5000. The deposit held with the Methodist Central Finance Board stood at £14,529 on August 31st, awaiting the gift-aid refund of £1,800 mentioned above (which we understand has just been received in early November). The current account working balance stood at £873 at the end of August.

As for 2018-19, a balanced budget was prepared (income equals expenditure) which, as ever, will be monitored as the year unfolds. We already know that the solar panel problem will

adversely impact income but we will save some expenditure as a result of Andrea Ellams' withdrawal from her paid role. Beyond that, there will be the usual swings and roundabouts!

Finally, the church continues to be immensely grateful for the generosity of everyone, giving as they are able, who shares in its life in so many and varied ways. We are grateful too to the Chancellor of the Exchequer whose recent Budget Statement included, in the small print, provision for the small cash donations amount on which gift aid may be claimed to be increased from £20 to £30 from April 2019 (subject to Parliamentary approval): every little helps!

John Bell, Treasurer

Foodbank update

As the Advent rapidly approaches, the Food Bank are again promoting the idea of the 'Reverse Advent Calendar'. Some will remember this initiative from last year. The idea is simple - for every day during Advent you add an item of food to a Box which is then taken across to the Food Bank depot shortly after Christmas, for distribution to those in greatest need. Here is some further information and some ideas for items which you could add to your 'Reverse Advent Calendar'

For those who would like to donate items for distribution for the Christmas period, Michael will be making a trip to the Food Bank depot during week before Christmas – so it would be helpful to collect together any items you would like to be taken by Sunday 17th December. Last year to the end of August 2018 we donated an incredible 326Kg.

We will take any 'Reverse Advent calendar' boxes you have filled, during the first week of January.

On the 6th November the Trussell Trust, published new statistics showing between April and Sept of this year, there was a 13% increase in the number of emergency food supplies given to people by foodbanks in our network, compared to the same period in 2017. Of the 658,000 three day supplies provided nationally, over 96,000 were provided in the North West.

Your continuing support to this important work to help those in desperate need, is, as always greatly appreciated.

Lesley Gough