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Bromsgrove Methodist Church and Centre



August – September 2024

Bromsgrove Methodist Church and Centre: encouraging, supporting and developing followers of Jesus Christ and sharing God's love in the wider community

REGULAR SERVICES and KEY CONTACTS

SUNDAY

- 1st 9.00 am Holy Communion
 - 10.30 am Morning Worship
- 2nd 10.30 am Morning Worship
- 3rd 10.30 am Morning Worship
- 4th 10.30 am Morning Worship
 - Holy Communion at one 10.30 am service each month
 - Holy Communion at 6.00 pm once a month
 - Special Services as arranged.

Please see the Centre Pages for full service details

- Minister: Revd Stephen Levett 151 Birmingham Road Bromsgrove. B61 0DJ Tel: (01527) 575017
- Centre Office: 19 Stratford Road Bromsgrove, B60 1AS Tel: (01527) 835843

Room Bookings: e-mail: bromsgroveroombookings@gmail.com

Find out more at <u>www.brommethcentre.org.uk</u>



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Material for FORUM to the Editor, Jim Buchanan, c/o Centre Office or email:les.jim42@btinternet.com

Opinions expressed are those of the writers and do not necessarily represent the views of the Church at any level

Thoughts from our Senior Steward looking to the future

I am aware as we enter our summer 'recess' we are entering a time of uncertainty within the life of our church as we have not been successful in replacing our minister and so the circuit is going to have to spread the remaining presbyters more thinly than before.



As I write this, we do not even know how this will be worked out although we have been told our presbyter will initially be Steve Levett with the support of a lay worker and hopefully Deacons Gwynn and Janet.

The circuit will be divided into 2 hubs of 5 churches in each and each hub will have Bromsgrove and Redditch churches. This is all a bit confusing and if I'm honest daunting. We are not alone in our predicament and plenty of churches up and down the Connexion have been managing this kind of situation.

It is what it is and we have to get on with it.

Change can be difficult to manage but if we all pull together and look at new ways of working, I'm sure we can work it out for the best.

We are not alone; God is with us and I'm sure He still has plans for us in Bromsgrove. We must go forward in faith where he leads us. We are the church in Bromsgrove and not the minister so we can still spread the good news and share wonderful fellowship as we have been doing.

Good things have been happening at our church, the Welcome Café goes from strength to strength and we have just agreed to continue the Ukrainian Café on the last Friday in the month.

The Memory Changes café on the third Friday in the month is also a success with numbers attending increasing and it might be we are outgrowing room 6 and will need to use the hall.

The Girls and Boys Brigades are thriving as is the Mums and Toddler group. There are lots of other activities going on in our church building for us to engage with.

So, over the summer have a good break, it is a time of rest and restoration. Hopefully the sun will shine at some point! Then. when we get going again in September. we will be able to rise to the challenges that face us with positivity and vigour, it is God's work that we do and he is faithful to us.

Janet Millward (Senior Steward)

Dates for Your Diary



Our friends from Ukraine will once again be opening the Café serving traditional Ukrainian food on **the last Friday of September, October and November. Full details will follow**

> BROMSGROVE & REDDITCH WELCOME REFUGEES

BRWR Fashion Show On the afternoon of **Saturday 5th October** Bromsgrove and Redditch Welcome Refugees are holding another Fashion show. Tickets will be available from Margaret Evans or Jenny Jones from September.

St William of Roskilde Day September 2nd *Standing up for social justice*

Here is a saint for anyone who thinks Christian leaders should stand up for justice – even at the risk of angering secular powers.

It all began when William was an English priest serving as chaplain to Canute, King of England (1016-35), who decided to visit Scandinavia.

William went along, and was so shocked by the ignorance, idolatry and superstition that he stayed on to help preach the Gospel. Eventually he became Bishop of Roskilde (Zeeland), working tirelessly among the people as a beloved pastor.

But William's main challenge came in his determination to improve the conduct of the King, Sweyn Estridsen.

The King had had some criminals killed without trial and in a church, violating sanctuary. William then forbade him to enter the church next day until he was absolved from the guilt of shedding blood unjustly.

Courtiers drew their swords, and William showed himself ready to die. Instead, Sweyn confessed his crime and donated land to Roskilde church as a peaceoffering.



King Sweyn

St William

Thenceforward until the king's death Sweyn and William worked together to foster Christianity in Scandinavia.

Remembering the genius of JRR Tolkien

Fifty one years ago, on 2nd September 1973, JRR Tolkien, the fantasy writer, poet, scholar and educator, died. He was best known for his novels The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings.

Born in Bloemfontein, South Africa and descended from a family that originated in an area that was then East



Prussian and is now Russian, Tolkien – always known as Ronald – thought of himself as unmistakeably English. He was brought up in the Birmingham area after the death of his father, who had stayed in South Africa while his wife and children visited England.

Ronald's mother then died when he was 12, and he was raised by aunts, uncles and a guardian who was a Roman Catholic priest, Father Francis.

Tolkien later became a devoted Catholic and insisted that his fiancée, Edith Bratt, join him in that faith. She did so, reluctantly, and they had a long and extremely happy marriage. His beliefs were a significant factor in C S Lewis's conversion to Christianity.

Tolkien had a longstanding fascination with language and became an acknowledged expert in both linguistics and mythology, which led to his writing his two most famous works – and several others.

Despite assumptions by some, none were intended as children's books, and The Lord of the Rings was never a trilogy – it was printed in three volumes for cost reasons.

The huge success of his writing led to unexpected fame. He and his wife eventually moved to Bournemouth and lived there until she died in 1971.

He was then given rooms in Merton College, Oxford. He said in an interview shortly before his death: "A pen is to me as a beak is to a hen."

Since 2003, The Tolkien Society has organised Tolkien Reading Day, which takes place on 25th March in schools around the world.

St Francis of Assisi

There are many versions of the following St Francis of Assisi prayer. This one is an English translation of the earliest known version that was written in French, and it's one that is much needed in our world today

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me bring love. Where there is offence, let me bring pardon. Where there is discord, let me bring union. Where there is error, let me bring truth. Where there is doubt, let me bring faith. Where there is despair, let me bring hope. Where there is darkness, let me bring your light.

Where there is sadness, let me bring joy.

O Master, let me not seek as much to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand to be loved as to love,

for it is in giving that one receives, it is in self-forgetting that one finds, it is in pardoning that one is pardoned, it is in dying that one is raised to eternal life. Amen

Encouragement

Browsing through Facebook a minister came across posts from 'Clergy Coaching Network', some ascribed to a person, some anonymous. He found the following posts to be challenging for individuals and for congregations:

- Be the reason that someone feels welcome, seen, heard, valued, loved and supported.
- Jesus doesn't care how many Bible verses you have memorised. He cares more about how you treat people.
- If you see what needs to be repaired and how to repair it, then you have found a piece of the world that God has left for you to complete. But if you only see what is wrong and what is ugly in the world, then it is you yourself that needs repair.
- Wanted: ENCOURAGERS (We have a surplus of critics already, thanks)
- We are already in the presence of God. What is absent is awareness!
- Being a follower of Christ doesn't make me immune to brokenness, pain or hardship. It just means I have an anchor to hold me in the storm.
- Depression is not a sin. It's an illness. Mental illness requires treatment, not condemnation. Walk gently in the lives of others. Not all wounds are visible!
- Think about this one: As I watched the dog chasing its tail, I thought dogs are easily amused. Then I realised I was watching the dog chasing its tail!
- Enjoy and be challenged.

MICHAELMAS

"Autumn, season of mists and mellow fruitfulness", so wrote the poet John Keats. It is the season of Harvest Festivals and new beginnings and also, the festival of St Michael's Mass (or Michaelmas).

St Michael is one of the Archangels and he is credited with leading God's army and driving out Satan and his followers from Heaven. His feast day falls on 29th September in the calendar of the western churches.

The date is close to the Autumn Equinox, which heralds the shortening of days and the coming of winter darkness. In earlier times once the harvests were all gathered in, folk gave thanks and prayed for protection against the power of evil. In early societies darkness was associated with evil.

In the secular world, Michaelmas Day is one of the four Quarter Days and it was the time for hiring servants, paying rents, renewing leases and the drawing up of land agreements. Magistrates were elected and the academic years in universities began. The legal profession also used Michaelmas as the first of the four terms of the legal year.

In time-honoured fashion, several traditions grew up around the celebration of Michaelmas and some of them, naturally, are connected with food.

The Michaelmas Goose, one that was well fattened and had been fed on the stubble from the fields after the harvest, was cooked and eaten as a protection against financial hardship throughout the winter. Goose Fairs were often held on Michaelmas Day, and the Nottingham Fair still takes place today.

In Scotland, St Michael's Bannock was baked from the cereals grown on the farm's land, cooked on a lambskin, moistened with sheep's milk and usually cooked by the eldest daughter of the family.

Another tradition was that the finding of a ring in a Michaelmas Pie would mean an early wedding!

On a cautionary note, it was said that blackberry picking should not take place after 10th October because, by then, the Devil had spat on them!

As well as fairs there were other social activities. St Michael is the patron saint of horses and horsemen. In Scotland there were horse racing competitions with small prizes held on Michaelmas Day, which was also the only day a neighbour's horse could be lawfully "borrowed" the night before, ridden for the entire day, and returned safely before daybreak!

And finally, the Michaelmas Daisy, flowering from late August until the frosts, gives rise to the following verse, because it blooms alone when most other flowers have gone.

The Michaelmas Daisies, among dede weeds Bloom for Saint Michael's valorous deeds. And seems the last of flowers that stood, Till the feast of Saint Simon and Saint Jude.



In Memory

We give praise and thanks for the long life of **Eddie Palmer** who died recently. Our thoughts and prayers are with Jill, his wife of 67years, and all the family as they come to terms with the large gap left in their lives





MEMORY CHANGE CAFÉ

Forthcoming dates: 19th July 2024 16th August 2024 20th September 2024

2- 4pm Room 6, Bromsgrove Methodist Centre

Wow! What a psalm!

The Lord is my Shepherd.... (that's relationship) I shall not want (that's supply) He makes me to lie down in green pastures.... (that's rest) He leads me beside the still waters.... (that's refreshment) He restores my soul.... (that's healing) He leads me in the paths of righteousness.... (that's guidance) for His name's sake.... (that's purpose) Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.... (that's testing) I will fear no evil.... (that's protection) For you are with me.... (that's faithfulness) your rod and your staff they comfort me.... (that's discipline) you prepare a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.... (that's hope) you anoint my head with oil.... (that's consecration) my cup runs over.... (that's abundance) surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.... (that's blessing) and I will dwell in the house of the Lord.... (that's security) forever.... (that's eternity)

THE ORIGINAL 'BORROWER'?

Jesus was born in a borrowed manger.

He preached from a borrowed boat.

He entered Jerusalem on a borrowed donkey.

He ate the Last Supper in a borrowed upper room.

He was buried in a borrowed tomb.

Now he asks to borrow the lives of Christians to reach the rest of the world. If we do not speak, then he is dumb and silent.



August 2024

4 th	9.00 am Holy Communion 10.30 am Morning Worship	Revd Brian Mason Mrs M Foxall
11 th	10.30 am Holy Communion	Revd Anne Smith
18 th	10.30 am Morning Worship	Local arrangement
25 th	10.30 am Morning Worship 6.00 pm Holy Communion	Mr James Knott Revd Steve Levett

At the time of going to print the September preaching plan was not available.

September 2024

- 1st 9.00 am Holy Communion 10.30 am
 - Morning Worship
- 8th 10.30 am Holy Communion
- 15th 10.30 am Morning Worship
- 22nd 10.30 am Morning Worship 6.00 pm
 - Holy Communion
- 29th 10.30 am Morning Worship

Sunday Flowers

The following list indicates the names of those who will contribute to the cost of Sunday flowers during August and September.

	August		September
4th	Sandra Deboo	1s†	Mo Leigh
11th	Linda Ashworth	8th	Edna Braithwaite
18 th	Lynne & Liz Dovey	15 th	Irene Rhead
25th	Dorothy Cracknell	22nd	John Wyatt
		29 th	Lesley & Jim Buchanan

The Silent Sermon

A member of a certain church, who had previously attended services regularly, stopped going.

After a few weeks, the minister decided to visit him. He found the man at home all alone, sitting by a blazing fire.

Guessing the reason for his minister's visit, the man welcomed him awkwardly, and led him to a comfortable chair near the fireplace and waited.

The minister made himself at home but said nothing. In the grave silence, he contemplated the dance of the flames around the burning logs. After some minutes, he took the fire tongs, carefully picked up a brightly burning ember and placed it to one side of the hearth all alone. Then he sat back in his chair, still silent.

The host watched all this in quiet contemplation. As the one lone ember's flame flickered and diminished, there was a momentary glow and then its fire was no more. Soon it was cold and dead.

Not a word had been spoken since the initial greeting. But now the minister chose his time to leave. He slowly stood up, picked up the cold, dead bit of coal and placed it back in the middle of the fire. Immediately it began to glow once more, with the light and warmth of the burning coals around it.

With that, the minister smiled at his host, and quietly let himself out



♪ √7 HYMNS WE LOVE ♪ √7

Thanks for friends who keep on loving – by Gary Hopkins (b.1984)

This is a fairly lengthy hymn, so I share part of it with you. The whole hymn is found at StFN0.619.

Thanks for friends who keep on loving, finding ways to help us grow, celebrating our achievements, sharing in our pain and woe. God is glimpsed where love is faithful: mirrored here in time and space. Thanks to God for friends who love us: Christ revealed in every face.

Other people help to shape us when they take the time to share words of wisdom, honest actions through our journey in God's care... Thanks to God for friends who teach us: seeking talent yet ungrown. When we find our friendships challenged through mistakes and different views, we discover deeper living as the love of God renews.

For in Christ we see forgiveness, know a strength to still embrace. Thanks to God for friends who keep us: making real the gift of grace. Praise to God for this great gifting of relationship and friend..... Bless us Maker, Word and spirit as companions on the way. Thanks to God for friends who help us to fulfil our lives each day.

COMMENT

There is something in the saying that we all need someone in our lives. We are social animals, and it is a well-known fact that if we can socialise even occasionally that is good for our mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. The very act of sharing and caring in a time of chatting over a cuppa, lifts our souls. The opposite is also true – that too much time spent alone, as everyone who lives alone knows, is not the best for us, as we can become introspective, self-centred, lose a sense of proportion, and let things prey on our minds. To engage in conversation whether a phone call or in person, helps us to see that our own woes are not uncommon. Other people too have their "pain and woe", as Hopkins says.

Coffee houses and teashops have been a meeting place for centuries, and for a reason. Achievements are celebrated with others, encouragement is shared, real

friendships are forged, people see others achieve their potential, they are helped to" grow". People need each other, even if they don't always freely admit it. (We were in a certain large garden centre restaurant today and there must have been two hundred people chatting and taking refreshment, just enjoying a little companionship perhaps).

Listening, empathising, caring in a non-judgmental way, offering a word of understanding and compassion are how we "help to shape the other person, if we take the time to share."

Friendships can also go through a difficult patch at times – we make "mistakes" and need to make allowances for careless words, or strongly held "different views". It is good to find forgiveness in our hearts and to once more "embrace" the other person, and also to have the grace to ask forgiveness.

Life is a journey and we do not undertake it alone. It is a series of relationships, and God given they are ("this great gifting of relationship and friend"). Like all spiritual gifts a loving friendship has to be cherished, and not taken for granted. It is a mutual giving and receiving, and will not flourish if all one-sided.

So, with Hopkins we "give thanks to God" for those who presence in our lives makes a difference – those who "help us to fulfil our lives each day."



Church Hubs in the Bromsgrove & Redditch Circuit

July 14th 2024

Dear friends,

This notice is being made available to all members and attenders in the Bromsgrove & Redditch Circuit of the Methodist Church to introduce and explain changes that are planned regarding ministerial and lay worker staffing in the churches and to how churches relate to one another. Further and fuller briefings will follow in due course.

What?

The churches in the Circuit are going to be grouped into two hubs of five churches each. The exact makeup of each hub is yet to be decided. Each hub will be overseen by a Presbyter supported by a Lay Worker who will work together across the five churches under their care in ministry and mission. As the vision for and experience of the hubs develop, we anticipate adding to the lay worker staff teams in each hub, with the intention of supporting the ministry and mission of each individual church, the hubs and Circuit to survive, thrive and grow.

Context. Working groups, proposed to and approved by the February Circuit Meeting, were held during Spring exploring options and opportunities to address challenges presented by a decrease in personnel available in and to the Circuit. Out of one of these working groups a proposal emerged to form hubs. The Circuit Leadership Team worked to develop the idea further, bringing it to the June Circuit meeting where it was discussed, proposed and agreed.

Why?

Amongst the motivations for forming the hubs are the following: **Mutual support in mission**. As a Circuit and as churches we have stated our desire for and commitment to growth in mission and evangelism. The hubs will be formed with this priority in mind. Churches will support one another, pray for, learn together, learn from one another and on occasions share together in mission in individual churches or as a whole with the support of the ordained and lay workers.

Closer relationships. Strength comes through unity. The hubs will better facilitate building of relationships across churches, closer working together, and sharing in various aspects of church life and ministry together including in pastoral care. Whilst not the primary or initial motivation, in time the hubs

have potential to encourage a revisiting and enabling of the sharing of officers, merging some teams, and the merging of church councils should this appear to be beneficial.

Realism. The numbers of Presbyters and Deacons available across the Methodist Church is likely to continue to decrease. Whilst we can never be 100% sure, the likelihood going forward is that we will be blessed if we can have the equivalent of 2.5 ordained ministers in the Circuit. When we do go into stationing seeking a Presbyter for September 2025 onwards it is hoped that evidence in our stationing profile of the beginning of, and vision for further development of the hubs with a strong relational and missionary focus may prove attractive to some Presbyters seeking a Circuit and station willing to explore creative ways of developing church life and mission.

When?

Begin exploring, imagining and dreaming from September 2024, with the aim of launching the hubs in January 2025.

A prayer for God to break through in the life of our churches:

God of love, God for all, your purposes are more beautiful than we can possibly imagine.

Fill us with your Holy Spirit. Help us let go of all that holds us back. Open our lives and our churches to new seasons of humility and faith, of change and growth. Shake us up with the Good News of Jesus and show us the way. **Amen**

Rev Stephen Levett, Superintendent Minister of the Bromsgrove & Redditch Circuit



Are the thoughts expressed in these words familiar to any of our readers. It would be interesting to hear your views. I CANNOT TELL I cannot tell which words were truly spoken Of which encounters happened as we're told. The truth in myths or story teller's token, And mystify through turns and twists of old. But this I know, that love is what He went by, That love he taught and for His life was spent. To realise God's Kingdom here on planet earth Was His life's story and now must be our Intent I cannot tell if our interpretations Are right or wrong, in part or incomplete. If we have missed some vital indication As metaphorically, we sit at Jesus' feet. But this I know, God's met in friend and stranger. The spirit's nudge which moves us into love. God's revelation even now continues, Seeking peace and love to soar, Just like the dove. (Tune: Londonderry Air)

And they say it is old fashioned

The family had been up in the attic together doing some cleaning. The children uncovered an old manual typewriter and asked, "Hey Mum, what's this?" She answered, "Oh...that's an old typewriter", thinking that would satisfy their

curiosity. "Well, what does it do?" they asked.

"I'll show you," she said and found a blank piece of paper. She rolled the paper into the typewriter and began striking the keys, leaving black letters of print on the page.

"Wow!" they exclaimed, "that's really cool, but how does it work like that? Where do you plug it in?"

She explained, "There is no plug, because It doesn't need electricity."

The children persisted, "Then where do you put the batteries?"

With a smile she said, "It doesn't need batteries either."

The children were amazed and one said, "This is fantastic; someone should have invented this a long time ago!"

Mobile Phone v Bible

What would happen if we treated our Bible as we treat our mobile phone? What if we carried it around in our purses or pockets? What if we flipped through it several times a day? What if we turned back to go get it if we forgot it? What if we used it to receive messages from the text? What if we treated it as though we couldn't live without it? What if we gave it to our children as a gift? What if we used it when we travelled? What if we used it in case of emergency? Unlike our mobile, we don't have to worry about our Bible being disconnected because of an unpaid bill. Jesus has already paid the bill. In full And just think – no dropped calls! God hears them all! Acknowledgement to All Saints and St John's Hove Church magazine

Many readers will be holidaying in Cornwall.....below is an "interesting" story emanating from that lovely County.

When you walk through a storm...

As many people know, many popular modern songs have their origins in folk songs and music. One such song was 'When you walk through a storm' from Carousel.

It has been discovered that this tune was first sung in a Cornish fishing village called Heada Cove. The village was destroyed by a fierce storm many years ago and no longer exists.

The village was famous for its unusual pastie which was square in shape. In general the Cornish people would not accept it as a pastie because of the shape, and so it became known as the Heada Pie.

Whenever the village was struck by a violent storm the population would congregate in the local church and take the pies to eat as they never knew how long the storm would last.

To pass the time they would sing local folk songs. One of the most popular songs was

'When you walk through a storm hold your Heada Pie'

Humour Corner

Everything in this picture is now in your pocket.



Ok fine, I'll go camping ...



Wonderful English signs from around the World Cocktail Lounge in Norway LADIES ARE REQUESTED NOT TO HAVE CHILDREN IN THE BAR. On the road from Nairobi to Mombassa in Kenya TAKE NOTICE WHEN THIS SIGN IS UNDER WATER, THIS ROAD IS IMPASSABLE In a Rome restaurant OPEN SEVEN DAYS A WEEK AND AT WEEKENDS Airline ticket office, Copenhagen. WE TAKE YOUR BAGS AND SEND THEM

Miscellaneous Musings

Notice on door: THIS IS THE BACK DOOR, THE FRONT DOOR IS ROUND THE BACK People are funny creatures, they want the front of the bus, the middle lane on the motorway and the back seat of the Church Accordion to a recent study, seven out of ten people don't notice when a word in a sentence is replaced by a musical instrument

And Finally What do YOU want in the FORUM magazine??

I have been editing the magazine for some time now and continue to enjoy doing the job. However, I do not receive a lot of feedback so find it difficult to know if the content is what is enjoyed or otherwise. Please consider the list below and let me know.....in writing preferably.

- More or less prayers and poems?
- ✤ A Recipe page?
- Campaigns to help those in need?
- Cartoons and other funnies (more or less)?
- What stops you sending in a contribution?
- More details of coming events
- A what happened 10 years ago item
- Would you miss FORUM?
- More photographs
- Any other ideas?
- What do you NOT want in the magazine

TELL THE EDITOR please!!!!!

The next edition of FORUM will cover the months of October and November with a deadline date for contributions being **Sunday 15th September.** Please e mail contributions to me at les.jim42@btinternet.com or put written items in the FORUM folder

in the Church Office.



Granite Henge conwall

The perfect break away in picturesque Looe Adjacent semi-detached cottage bungalows Each sleeps 4, in one double room & one twin Book one, or both together for 8 people No steps or stairs so ideal for limited mobility



*Open all year round *5 minutes from Beach *Heated Swimming Pool *Free Wi-fi *8 mins by car or bus to Looe and Polperro Centre Contact: 07976 291274

Foot Health For You

Clare Robinson Foot Health Practitioner S.A.C. Dip.

Mobile Service

07383 421310



Patricia James Dip CFHP, MPSPract FOOT HEALTH PRACTITIONER

- Toe nail cutting
- Corn and callus removal
- Treatment and advice on ingrown and fungal nail

Tel: 07733 458286















CHURCH ACTIVITIES AT THE CENTRE

MONDAY	6.00 pm	Girls' Brigade
TUESDAY	10.00 am	Toddler Group
	10.00 am	Knitting Group
WEDNESDAY	6.00 pm	Boys' Brigade Anchor Boys
	6.45 pm	Boys' Brigade Juniors
	7.45 pm	Boys' Brigade Company/Seniors
	7.30 pm	Meeting Point (1 st & 3 rd)
FRIDAY	10.30 am	Welcome Housegroup (1 st)
	10.30 am	Have You Heard Housegroup (2 nd)
2.00	- 4.00 pm	Memory Change Café (3 rd)
SATURDAY	10.30 am	CAMEO (1 st & 3 rd)

During the week other groups and organisations run activities at the Centre too. See the noticeboards for information.





Summer and Autumn in United Kingdom

