Wrenbury & Nantwich Mission Area Methodist Churches

Newsletter No 32 1 November 2020

I don’t know if it’s my perception but does Hallowe’en seen to be getting more popular year on year? The shops have been full of scary costumes, witches’ hats, fake blood, loads of “treats” and mounds of pumpkins.

Many Christians feel uncomfortable when Hallowe’en approaches. I’ve always wrestled with it and never let my children go trick or treating (there should be less of that this year). My girls do love dressing up for Hallowe’en, their outfits and make-up are usually a work of art.

For retailers it’s another opportunity to make money, turning what was a religious festival into profit. Every event gives an opportunity for not only dressing up, but also eating chocolate. Christmas has selection boxes, Easter eggs, Advent chocolate calendars. Hallows’ Eve treats. As soon as one festival ends, the chocolates change in the shops. Easter eggs are on the shelves on Boxing Day!

Hallowe’en, 31 October, is seen as a dark day, full of witchcraft and terror. But if we look back in history it’s different: **“Hallowe’en**” is a contraction of a precursor to **“All Hallows’ Day**”, “**Hallowmass**”, also known as All Saints’ Day, which is celebrated on 1 November. The focus of All Hallows’ Day is to celebrate people who have died believing in Christ as they do not fear death, because Jesus overcame it.

October 31 has been seen in the Christian world as a “night of the devil”. However, historically it was spent celebrating a triumph over the devil. Instead of being killjoys and not letting our children/grandchildren carve their pumpkins, we can reclaim the origins of the festival of “**All Hallows’ Eve”** being a **“Hallowed Evening”,** a **”Holy Night”**

Jesus said, *“* ***I am the light of the world, whoever follows me will never walk in darkness****.*” For those of us who believe in Jesus, we too are called to be lights in the darkness.

We can carve our positive pumpkins: if you’re skilled enough you could carve **JESUS** out of your pumpkin, or a cross with the light shining through.

We’re living in challenging, difficult times. Coping with the pandemic will feel more difficult as the nights become longer and darker. Many are already tired and weary, they’ve been isolated in the summer and may feel imprisoned during the winter. Health care workers are entering their busiest period, already tired from the demand of Covid 19. Businesses who should be looking forward to the “golden quarter” are worried if they will still be in business by Christmas.

In these dark days, we need to be light bearers, standing alongside people who find themselves in dark places. The second hymn I’ve selected for the act of worship is a favorite of mine: **611** in “Singing the Faith”: “Brother, Sister, let me serve you”. It was written in the late 70s by Richard Gillard, born in England but emigrated to New Zealand when he was 3. He wrote the third verse first, ***“ I will hold the Christ light for you”.*** You may want to ponder on that for a few moments, on what that might mean. It’s interesting to understand holding a “Christ light” (the example, love and companionship of Jesus held, as it were, like a candle), a starting point for pilgrimage and servanthood. It’s not just about walking towards a point of worship and meditation, but an opportunity for companionship. We were created to be in a relationship not only with one another but God.

We all have times in our lives when we want/need someone to walk by our side. It could be sharing a special event - a holiday, a meal, a birthday because we want to share the joy; or a low/difficult time, a time of illness/bereavement when it’s just good to know someone else is there, we’re not alone. We’re fortunate if we find someone to walk our journey with us, for some it’s a partner but for many it’s a friend. I met someone in the playground on Amy’s first day at school; she was 5 and is now 28. She’s been there for birthdays, holidays and weddings, but there through the challenging dark times of dementia and bereavement. We’ve laughed together a lot, but cried together as well.

Servanthood in the hymn is imaged as being alongside others, whatever their need or situation, which may evoke tears, but equally might be happiness and hilarity. What is important is the gift, at all times, not only supporting others, “*I will hold my hand out to you”,* but also being able to receive graciously the gifts, support and companionship that others have to offer us. *“ Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.”*

We’re often good at doing things for others, but bad at asking or allowing others to help us. We often feel good when we’ve been able to help someone else*,* it’s often why people volunteer (and there is absolutely nothing wrong with that). I was amazed how many people volunteered on Christmas Day at Nantwich Methodist Church to serve lunch. The same happened in Hull when we fed the homeless on Christmas Day. It makes us feel good when we help others. So as the hymn goes on to say *“Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too”* we need to allow others to help us, so they too will be blessed.

You may not know the hymn, but I hope that you will focus on the words and reflect on who has been a *Christ light*  for you, and who could be a companion on the journey for you.

**With love and prayers,**

***Deacon Jill***

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 **PRAYER and CHURCH FAMILY NEWS**

Congratulations and warmest wishes to **John** **Meikle** (NMC) who will be 80 years young on Wednesday 4th. He hopes to celebrate with a long-awaited hip replacement on Tuesday 3rd **!**

**David Valentine** (NMC) has been diagnosed with cancer and is to undergo tests and surgery. He and Jean would appreciate your prayers.

**Margaret Tilley** (Broad Lane) is still in Ward 21B at Leighton Hospital.

**David Fox** remains in hospital at present with advanced dementia and cancer.

 We are sad to learn that **Rev. Robbie Bowen**, our minister in Crewe 2010-2015, passed away last Sunday, after a long battle with cancer. Please pray for Ruth, Hannah, Dan and all his family, friends and congregations in Cornwall.

 Please keep all these people, others you know to be in particular need, and their families in your prayers during their sad and difficult days.

 Remember all those who cannot be with their nearest and dearest as they approach the end of this life. May God bless them all with his peace, and strength and hope for what is to come.

 Also uphold in prayer everyone living in particular isolation. Let us show our love by phoning or writing. Especially may they know God’s presence every day.

 Pray for the American election on Tuesday, that the the government voted in may be the best for the nation.

 Pray for our own politicians as they seek solutions to complex, widespread problems. May what is best for all society take priority

over personal gain or glory, and may the population value the welfare of others in the community as they decide their behaviour.

 Remember the millions of people overseas who are afflicted by drought, famine, war, natural disasters, other diseases in addition to covid; but have few resources for survival.

 South Sudan is experiencing drastic flooding, affecting some 856,000 people already severely impoverished. Homes and crops are washed away, transport is only possible by foot or canoe; but where can they go?

 You will know of other needs via the charities you follow and support. Pray for all who administer aid, and give to them as you can.

 Whichever people, places and situations cause us concern, how much more must God’s heart grieve. Let us take them all to him in prayer, but also remember that we are his hands and feet, voice and heart here in his world !

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**Christian Resources for Life,**

at the **Methodist Book Centre** in Hanley.

November 2020 is our **75th Birthday**.

Join us in store or on line for four weeks

of amazing offers.

Free Goodie Bags, Free Prize Draw,

And very special prices on a number of titles.

Gitana Street, Hanley, ST1 1DY 01782 212146

www.crfl.co.uk enquiries@crfl.co.uk

**Wrenbury & Nantwich Mission Area Methodist Churches**

Sunday 1 November 2020 (All Saints’ Day)

This short act of worship has been prepared for us to use as we are not able to gather for worship. We can remain connected in fellowship by following this simple act of worship around the time you would normally be gathered for worship in your chapel/church.

**Call to worship**

Rejoice people of God. Praise the Lord.
Let us keep the feast in honour of all God's saints, in whose victory the angels rejoice and glorify the Son of God.

**Hymn: For All the Saints (StF745)**

For all the saints who from their labours rest,

who thee by faith before the world confessed,

thy name, O Jesus, be for ever blest:

Alleluia, alleluia!

Thou wast their rock, their fortress and their might;

thou, Lord, their captain in the well-fought fight;

thou in the darkness still their one true light:

Alleluia, alleluia!

O may thy soldiers, faithful, true, and bold,

fight as the saints who nobly fought of old,

and win, with them, the victor's crown of gold!

Alleluia, alleluia!

O blest communion, fellowship divine!

We feebly struggle, they in glory shine;

yet all are one in thee, for all are thine:

Alleluia, alleluia!

And when the strife is fierce, the warfare long,

steals on the ear the distant triumph song,

and hearts are brave again, and arms are strong:

Alleluia, alleluia

The golden evening brightens in the west;

soon, soon to faithful warriors comes their rest;

sweet is the calm of paradise the blest:

Alleluia, alleluia!

But lo, there breaks a yet more glorious day:

the saints triumphant rise in bright array;

the King of Glory passes on his way!

Alleluia, alleluia!

From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest coast,

through gates of pearl streams in the countless host,

singing to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost:

Alleluia, alleluia!

*William Walsham How (1823-1867)*

**Prayer**

Let us pray together

With all your people, on earth and in heaven, we praise your name, O God, for you alone are worthy of adoration. And you reign supreme beyond space and time.

In you is the fullness of perfection;
in you is our hope of salvation;
in you is the promise of life eternal.

With all your people, we praise your name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Let us make our confession to God.**

God of mercy, forgive us our limited vision and our reluctance to trust in what we cannot see.

Forgive our preoccupation with the here and now and our failure to seek the things above.

Forgive our earthbound thinking and our feeble sense of the communion of saints.

Rekindle in us, by your Holy Spirit, the fire of your love, that with clean hands and pure hearts we may serve you faithfully on earth and come at last, with all your saints, to the peace and joy of heaven;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

In Christ we are set free.
Through Christ we are forgiven.
Amen. Thanks be to God.

**Collect of the Day**

Holy God, you have called witnesses from every nation and revealed your glory in their lives. Grant to us the same faith and love
that, following their example, we may be sustained by their fellowship and rejoice in their triumph; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. *(from MWB, page 558)*

**Today’s Gospel Reading: Matthew 5.1-12**

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom

of heaven.

Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

**Time to Reflect**

 Methodists tend not to do Saints’ Days. But remember that in the New Testament all the faithful are saints. Saints are real people, not those figures portrayed in stained glass windows. We have all known many saints - those who brought us to faith, those who encouraged us on our way, those who provided the care and concern we all need from time to time. Saints are also those who challenge and question, who invite us to rethink our cherished attitudes and favourite ways of doing things, and ask us to test them against the call of God in this age. All of them are the saints we commemorate at All Saints’ tide. All of them are our partners in prayer and in service.

 Later you might find time to read Luke’s more challenging version of the Beatitudes (Luke 6: 20-31). In either version, how do these words speak to us, the saints of this generation? By world standards even the poorest in Britain are incredibly rich - that is one reason why so many migrants want to come here. Yet I, like many who have experienced hospitality in the world’s poorer places, can attest to the fact that the hospitality offered by many of the world’s poorest people is way in excess of what they can expect to receive in the rich world.

 Frequently, the saints, famous or unsung, have not really known where God was leading them, why God wanted something done, or how to go about doing it. Often they doubted whether they would have much impact - for humility is frequently the mark of a true saint. But they got on with it. And we are called to follow their example, to follow the great heritage of all God's faithful people down the ages. Let us pray that we may live up to whatever he is calling us to do in this age.

**Take a time to sit quietly**

**A time of prayer**

United in the company of all the faithful, let us pray for the church throughout the world and for all who seek to follow Christ in this generation. Through them and through us,

*Your kingdom come, Your will be done.*

Let us pray for the world and all its peoples. Let us pray that those in authority in this and all nations may seek justice and peace for all.

*Your kingdom come, Your will be done.*

Let us pray for those in need, especially . . ,
and for all who minister to those in need. Draw near to all with your healing love.

*Your kingdom come, Your will be done.*

Remember in your mercy all who have gone before us, especially those who were significant in each of our faith journeys. Join our prayers with those of the whole company saints.

*Your kingdom come, Your will be done.*

Lord of the church, hear our prayer and make us one in heart and mind to serve you now and always. Amen.

**The Lord’s Prayer …**

**Hymn StF 611**

Brother, sister, let me serve you;
Let me be as Christ to you;
Pray that I might have the grace to
Let you be my servant, too.

We are pilgrims on a journey;
We are family on the road;
We are here to help each other
Walk the miles and bear the load.

I will hold the Christ-light for you
In the night time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you,
Speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping;
When you laugh I’ll laugh with you;
I will share your joys and sorrows
Till we’ve seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in Heaven
We shall find such harmony,
Born of all we’ve known together
Of Christ’s love and agony.

Brother, sister, let me serve you;
Let me be as Christ to you;
Pray that I might have the grace to
Let you be my servant, too.

**A prayer of blessing**

God give us grace to follow his saints
in faith and hope and love;
and the blessing of the most Holy Trinity,
Spirit, Son and Father,
be among us and remain with us always. Amen. *(partly from MWB page 59)*

Original Materials by Dudley Coates

All Hymns reproduced under CCLi 155789

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***Lightwood Green Chapel***

**Services in November 6.30pm**

1 Nov Local Arrangement

8 Nov Mike Valentine

15 Nov Maureen Morgan

22 Nov Rev Malcolm Lorimer

29 Nov Local Arrangement

*Facemasks must be worn*

*Social distancing must be maintained*

*No singing . Max 30 people*

**Nantwich Methodist Church**

November 1st, 10.30 am Rev. Robin Fox

Doors open 10.15am

Face masks must be worn

Social distancing must be maintained

No singing. Max 30 people

Book with Margaret Kirkman, 611942

by noon on Friday if possible.

***St. Andrew’s Chapel, Aston***

Sunday 1 Nov 11am

Jenny & David Smith

Sunday 8 Nov 10.45 am

Short act of remembrance at Lych Gate

 followed by service in Chapel led by

David Smith

*Face masks must be worn*

*Social distancing must be maintained*

*No singing. Max 30 people*

***Broomhall and Sound Chapel***

Sunday 1 Nov. 10.30 am

Service led Mrs Jenny Bourne

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82976672769?pwd=aG9pSjMvR3dzaDJaZlFkcnduSmFTZz09>
Meeting ID: 829 7667 2769
Passcode: 366121

Doors Open 10.15am

Sun 8 Nov. Remembrance Sunday

Service in church (no Zoom service)

10.45 am led by Deacon Jill Taylor

*Face masks must be worn*

*Social distancing must be maintained*

*No singing. Max 30 people*

***Baddiley & Ravensmoor Chapel***

Sunday 1 Nov 11 am

Led by Deacon Jill Taylor

*Face masks must be worn,*

*social distancing maintained, no singing*

Written by a lady in her 80s …

**Following the Rules**

 The world has caught a virus,

 But it’s nothing you can see.

 So here I am on house arrest

 In case it’s after me!

 It seems I’m very vulnerable

 ‘Cos my youth is in the past.

 Age is the only thing

 That suddenly works fast!

 They’ve banned nice friendly chats

 To anyone who’s near,

 But if I follow all the rules

 I might be here next year!

**I choose LOVE**

I choose Inclusion. I choose Empathy. Compassion. Equality. Dignity. Diversity.

I choose Community. Kindness. Integrity. Honesty. Respect. I choose Justice.

I choose Facts. Peace. The Planet.

I choose Humanity.

From **Crewe Salvation Army**

A reminder that COVID requires our Christmas Appeal to be run in a very different way: we cannot accept physical gifts or sort toys and food while quarantining and socially distancing.

We can only provide limited support although the demand will be even higher this year. To give as much support as possible we’ll provide vouchers to ‘spend’ on most-needed items.

Therefore we ask churches to please give financially this year.

 At Nantwich gifts can be placed in the collection basket in an envelope marked “Salvation Army”. Other churches will have their own system.

 For anyone wishing to give by bank transfer:

 Bank – Reliance Bank

 Sort Code – 60-01-73

 Account number – 00178123

 Account name – SATCO General Income

 Payment reference – CR01/11000/GP1-\*\* (\*\* is the initial of the donor – 2 characters only).

 The payment ref. will allocate the gift to Crewe.

If you give directly to the bank it would help if you email us at crewe@salvationarmy.org.uk so we can look out for the donation.

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**Teenage Son**: “Dad, I’ve been thinking. I passed my test and I’m a good driver. Could I borrow the car sometimes?”

**Dad**: “On three conditions. You work hard at school so you mature academically. You spend time with your Bible, so you mature spiritually. You get your hair cut.”

Some time later …

**Son**: “Dad, I’ve been getting good grades at school. I’ve been reading my Bible – I actually found some really good things in it. Could I please borrow the car?”

**Dad**: “I’m proud of you, but you haven’t had your hair cut.”

**Son**: “I’ve been thinking that Jesus and his pals, and the prophets and old guys, had long hair.”

**Dad:** “And they walked everywhere !”

**\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \***

**Q**: What do you call a hippie's wife?

**A**: Mississippi.

*“Dad, will you put the cat out?”*

*“I didn’t know it was on fire!”*

The shovel was a ground-breaking invention.

*5/4 of people admit that they’re bad with fractions.*

**Nantwich Food Bank …**

…also cannot operate in the usual way, despite the need for support having risen drastically during lockdown, and an extra demand this week with schools closed.

As on Saturday 24th, most needed items are:-

Tinned meats (casseroles, chicken in sauce, pies

 – eg Fray Bentos)

 Orange juice Tinned fruit Tinned custard

 Coffee Toilet rolls Disinfectant spray.

Drop-off points are: Elim Church, Morrisons, Sainsburys, St. Mary’s Parish Office, Nationwide Building Society, Tesco in Crewe.

They also invite you to join in their **Reverse** **Advent Calendar** again: through December until Christmas Eve (not necessarily every day, just as you are able) donate one item from this suggested list:

 Dec. 1 Tinned gammon

 2 Tinned salmon

 3 Gift for a child aged 1-4

 4 Tinned rice pudding

 5 Tinned custard

 6 Washing powder

 7 Washing up liquid

 8 Coffee

 9 Gift for child aged 4-8

 10 Christmas cake

 11 Christmas pudding

 12 Toiletry gift set

 13 Small box chocolates

 14 Fancy biscuits

 15 Cheesy snack tub

 16 Crackers (to pull)

 17 Chocolate coins

 18 Gift for child aged 8-12

 19 Mince pies (sell by after 25/12/20)

 20 Tubes of sweets

 21 Gift for teenager

 22 Long-life juice

 23 Tinned fruit

 24 Sponge pudding

*(Apologies that the computer would only produce the writing or the pretty calendar!*

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Moses had the first tablet that could connect to the cloud.

*Does anyone need an ark? I Noah guy!*

I just found out I’m colour blind. The diagnosis came completely out of the purple.

*Atheism is a non-prophet organization*