

MEMO

Middlesbrough & Eston Methodist Outburst

SEPTEMBER -
NOVEMBER 2025



For everything there is a
season and a time for every
matter under heaven.

Ecclesiastes 3:1

FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

It is sad to have to report that Anne Smith my colleague in producing 'Memo' who has contributed many thoughtful articles and Editorials, is not well and is having to step down for the time being. Please keep her in your prayers.

This is of course the start of the new Methodist year when Ministers will be taking up new stations and leaving their old ones, often with a heavy heart.

Please pray for them at this time. We saw from the Conference service the new Ordinands and Deacons, what a joy that people are still responding to God's call to ministry, and we pray for these people as they begin their journey.

I am very happy that we are not losing a Minister. I have often said that in my opinion we have the best set of Ministers I can ever remember so let's keep them!!! and thank God for their Ministry amongst us.

Memo is a wonderful opportunity for Churches to speak out about their Christian journey and we can learn so much from each other. So don't be afraid to write an article for Memo about your church or about your thoughts and

opinions.

As we start this new Methodist year, we journey in faith to pray that through us as individuals, and as church families, God's will shall be done here in this place.

This is a time of church meetings starting again, of Church Councils, Circuit meetings and of course those lovely social events that bring us together to relax and enjoy fun and fellowship.

So may God bless you in this season of Mellow Fruitfulness and give us a real sense of joy at serving God together.

Dave on behalf of the
Communications Team

DEADLINE FOR NEXT EDITION OF MEMO

Please send all contributions
to the
Communications Team
C/O the Circuit office,
Nunthorpe Methodist Church,
Connaught Road, Nunthorpe,
Middlesbrough TS7 0BS

Or email to
mbrocircuit@gmail.com
by 1st October 2025



The Superintendent's Letter

A Justice-Seeking Harvest

Dear Friends,

As we gather to celebrate the Harvest Season, our churches will once again be adorned with symbols of abundance—baskets of fruit, loaves of bread, and tins of food. We will sing with gratitude, “Come, ye thankful people, come,” rejoicing in the fruits of creation and God’s generous provision.

Yet as the Methodist Church in Britain responds to God's call to be a Justice-Seeking Church, we cannot simply sing our harvest hymns and then move on.. Our thanksgiving must also lead us to reflection, and—more importantly—to action.

For while some of us gather around tables laden with good things, many across our world go hungry. Fields lie barren from drought, war disrupts food supplies, and global systems of inequality continue to widen the gap between the nourished and the malnourished.

As I write these words, the world is watching on in mounting horror at the plight of the people of Gaza who are starving as a result of a man-made famine.

Do we allow ourselves to become overwhelmed by feelings of helplessness?

Do we turn off the news because we are consumed by guilt that we have so much to eat whilst they have so little?

Or do we just turn away because we believe there’s nothing we can do?

To be a Justice-Seeking Church means we must hear the cries of the hungry as part of our worship. It means we are not only thankful for the harvest but also deeply committed to ensuring others are able to share it. Justice-seeking is not an optional extra to our faith: it is at the heart of discipleship. It reflects the ministry of Jesus, who fed the hungry, challenged the powerful, and called for the flourishing of all people.

So, what does this mean for us during this Harvest Season and beyond?

It means that as we pray for the hungry we should pray for the dismantling of unjust systems that perpetuate the conditions in which hunger is used as a weapon of war.

It means we must give generously to harvest appeals, to Eco Shops and Food Banks, not out of guilt, but out of compassion.

It means asking hard questions about trade justice, climate change, and the way food is grown, distributed and sold, that privilege some and exploit others.

It means changing how we live, what we consume, and being willing to use our voice and influence —as individuals, as congregations, and as a wider Church.

Let our Harvest this year be not just a thanksgiving, but a declaration: that we will not rest while our neighbours starve. That we believe in a Gospel where everyone has “daily bread.” That we seek justice not just in word, but in deed.

May this season of Harvest stir in us a holy dissatisfaction with the world as it is, and a deeper commitment to work for the world as God intends it to be.

Grace and Peace,

Rev John Howard-Norman



Here are Autumn Quiz questions to get your brain working

1. Which poet called Autumn “Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness”?
2. In 1962 who composed and sang the hit: It might as well rain until September?
3. What is a baby hedgehog called?
4. St Martin of Tours [4th Century] was the patron saint of beggars, drunks and the poor. When is Martinmas?
5. Which prophet saw a basket of summer fruit as signifying the end was near for Israel?
6. In October 1936 200 men marched from their home town to Westminster to highlight the poverty caused by the closure of their shipyard. What was the march known as?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 23

Smart car

A clergy friend of mine bought a new car that sported an on-board computer. On

Sunday morning he got into the car to drive to church, and the digital display lit up. Glancing at the readout, he chuckled at the announcement: “Time for service.”



CHANGE OF SEASONS



As I write this article on July 9th we are in the middle of another heatwave and I must admit to not being a fan of this kind of weather. For some people of course this time of year is great, a time to be out there in the sun and relish the heat.

I must admit I do like the Autumn. There is almost a sense of calm as we enter this season which can still give us lovely sunny days, but not quite as hot as today!! I do love the colours of Autumn and the smells of the countryside as I enjoy my walks. I guess as a retired teacher, I remember Autumn was the start of a new school year and although the summer holidays are over it is a new opportunity for teachers and pupils alike. I still enjoy this new start as a School Governor.

In our Methodist church we mark this new season with the start of our new Methodist year. The darker nights herald the start of the season of meetings, although as Preachers we now meet on Zoom on the dark nights.

The joy of watching creation change the composition of plants and flowers and trees ready for their winter hibernation is something never to be taken for granted.

Of course, the change to Winter can be somewhat of a shock to the system. If you're a little bit careful with the money like me, then it means putting on the heating!! but thankfully unlike some people, we can afford to have it on. For many people winter heralds real depression, the fear of coping with those heating bills, maybe bad weather keeping people who live on their own imprisoned in their homes. Dark evenings and nights can be sad for some people and there is a known mental condition brought on by the winter.

Of course there can be positives even in winter, those glorious frosty days when the sun shines and it is fresh and exhilarating to be out and about. Of course there is Christmas to look forward to. There is Advent to help us prepare for the coming of the Incarnation, God sending his Son Jesus to show he loves us so much. A real highlight of Winter. What about the New Year maybe a time of optimism and of course once December 21st is over the days become 'longer' leading to Spring.

I do welcome Spring as a new beginning what a joy to see new life in the garden and in the countryside. There is more daylight and that can cheer us. There is a sense maybe of hope as Creation reawakens to its new glory. Spring of course brings Easter, for us the story of the Passion of our Lord and the glory of the Resurrection, real new life for us all.

So, thank God for all his wonderful creation for the joy of the changing seasons for that sense of security that even the darkest winter day will eventually turn to Spring and to Summer.

So, I am back where I started, the summer the heat, the holidays, the wonder of our gardens and the countryside. The long days and a chance maybe to relax a little from the busy times. There are blessings in all the seasons and a God who loves us even on the darkest days!

Dave Elliott

Methodist Women in Britain



DISTRICT EVENTS

Autumn Day will take place at Sedgefield Methodist Church on Wednesday 1st October, with tea/coffee being served from 10am followed by the morning service. Please bring packed lunch and drinks will be provided.

Advent Day will take place at the Middlesbrough Hub (Linthorpe Road Methodist Church) on Wednesday 3rd December 10.00am - 3.30pm. "Look to the stars"; a day exploring hope on the edges of Middlesbrough

Beryl Haggath

STAINTON VILLAGE BIG SING LIVES ON!

On Sunday, June 22nd our annual Village Big Sing went ahead. This year it was led by Rev. Charity Hamilton (Methodist Minister) Rev Laura Wild (Church of England Vicar). At the beginning of the week we thought it was going to be far too hot but on the day the weather went to the other extreme. The breeze was quite strong and umbrellas were up and down and raincoats on and off .

However, we soldiered on singing with gusto "Thou rushing wind that art so strong" " Sweet the rain's new fall" after all the theme was 'Creation/ Creatures of God.' We are indeed thankful for " All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small". We'd invited people to bring their pets so we welcomed a few dogs, that were very well behaved and were blessed by Charity and Laura.



Once again we were accompanied by Marske Brass Band, senior and junior sections. They were marvellous playing through the inclement weather.

Afterwards we went into the hall where Rosemary and Denise provided refreshments:- tea, coffee, cold juice and delicious homemade ginger cake and carrot cake muffins. Thank you ladies.

As usual we thank the Memorial Hall Committee for allowing us to use the hall and its excellent facilities.



We appreciated the donations which amounted to £83 and were given to the Unicorn Centre (Riding for the disabled). They were very grateful and thanked everyone very much.

So roughly same time same place next year for the Big Sing 2026 but don't forget the next ecumenical Village event will be the December Christmas Carol Service inside the Memorial Hall.

Claire Tate



Cross over the City

Methodist Collection of Modern Art.

What does this look like to you? Painted in 1962, well before views of cities taken by drones were common, it does at least look like a cross superimposed over a grid pattern of city streets. Very modern! Maybe the black and white squares on the vertical are cars, snarled up traffic? The brown rectangles, houses? The colours are mostly dirty urban browns but the cross is definite. And there are flecks of gold, if you look closely. Jesus is there in the city.

The artist Michael Edmunds [1926-2014]. was an only child as his mother, Joanna May Burr, had died giving birth to him. As a small boy he grew up on an Dorset fruit farm and became fascinated by tar-splashed road men, farm labourers, Gypsies and squatters. Despite his architects training, in the war he was a Bevan Boy and found himself transported into a south Wales landscape of tips and terraced houses, receiving training to deal with collapsing roofs and creeping gas, and then working half a mile underground at Bedwas, near Caerphilly. The experience introduced him to contorted landscapes that would resurface often in his paintings.

After the war he worked as an architect for the NCB, designing canteens and pit head baths, and was a member of the society of Christian Artists, living principally in Wales.

Our urban chapels, like Linthorpe Road, Grove Hill and Trinity are very much situated in cross-roads in the middle of our cities and towns; let's pray that like the picture, we shed some of the gold of salvation in our communities.

Ruth Lewis

Love British Food 

British Food Fortnight 2025 – 26th September to 12th October

This is the 24th year of the British Food Fortnight. Which is a national celebration of the diverse and delicious food that Britain produces. Along with the health benefits and pleasures of eating quality, fresh, seasonal and regionally distinct produce.

It is aiming to be bigger than ever this year, involving restaurants, pubs, schools, universities, care homes, the NHS, and even the Houses of Parliament.

Why not take advantage of the fortnight, and see what one of our local restaurants and pubs might offer?



How their link to a MHAhome gives a new lease of life to a congregation

In May the closure of the local Methodist Church in Stainton in the Darlington District presented an unexpected challenge. With membership dwindling to just 15, the small congregation could no longer maintain their property or meet administrative requirements. Yet, rather than severing spiritual

connections, this transition has sparked renewed engagement between the wider Methodist community and the residents of MHA Montpellier Manor. "What we have here is unique: we give time and value to the spirituality of our residents," explains Revd Barbara Robinson, Chaplain at Montpellier Manor. This holistic approach represents the core mission that MHA Sunday celebrates each year – recognising the charity's commitment to enabling older people to live well in later life.

"We aim to show that the Methodist Church and MHA are part of the same family," shares Revd David Godfrey, Superintendent Minister Middlesbrough and Eston Methodist Circuit, who has witnessed how the closure became a catalyst for deeper integration. Monthly services that took place before the pandemic have been revitalised, with many church members now visiting the home directly.

This transformation reflects the adaptability at the heart of spiritual care. When the traditional church setting became unsustainable, the congregation found a new purpose in bringing worship to residents.

The home's manager, Donna, has observed tangible benefits from these strengthened connections, "Coffee morning would be a way to make residents meet and talk. It happened once before and the residents talked about it for a while but felt it was a one-off – but it doesn't have to be."

Musical worship continues to thrive, with one Methodist resident who used to play the organ now happy to play the piano during services, maintaining cherished traditions in their new setting.

As David thoughtfully observes, "Montpellier is an ever-changing environment. For many residents, MHA becomes their church as well as their home." This sentiment embodies the adaptability of faith communities facing change.

Montpellier Manor stands as a testament to spiritual resilience – demonstrating how, sometimes, the closure of traditional doors can open new pathways to meaningful connection and worship for older people in care settings.

The Methodist Church website

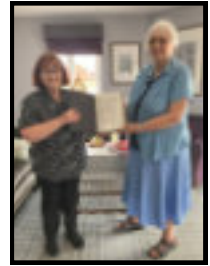
"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose"

Romans 8:28

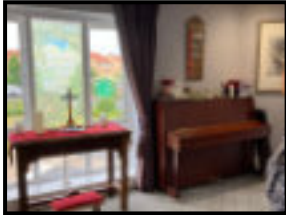
MONTPELLIER MANOR UPDATE

Today I spent some time with Claire (Senior Church Steward) at Stainton Methodist Chapel. Such a beautiful place.

We are overwhelmed by their kindness in gifting some very precious items to our care home, where the Stainton Chapel congregation will now worship on the first Sunday of the month at 3.00pm since Stainton Chapel has now closed.



We received some very, very special gifts from Stainton Methodist Chapel.



Among the gifts is the Communion table, a precious gift that links our care home with our Methodist roots. The history of this table, the prayers said around it...our residents are so thrilled to become custodians of such a blessed table.

Our prayer is that those who have worshiped around this table will feel welcome to worship with us here at

Montpellier Manor and to feel at home with us.

We have also been gifted hymn books, music books, the Bible, a very precious brass Cross, table cloths and the lectern.

On behalf of Residents, Staff and MHA we give deep heartfelt Thanks to Stainton Methodist congregation.

Our door and hearts are open in friendship and God's love to the congregation from Stainton Methodist Chapel as they join us for regular monthly worship.

God bless,

Barbara Robinson (Chaplain)



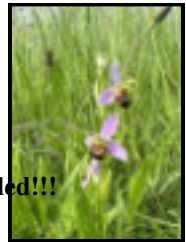
Adders Tongue

A find at Trinity

We've found some Adders Tongue Fern growing in the meadow area at Trinity. I didn't know what it was until a friend identified it with a plant finder app. I'd seen a botanist point some out on Fletcher's Farm TV program, they said that they were an indicator of ancient meadows.

I contacted a local botanist, who was quite excited as he wasn't aware of any sightings in Middlesbrough and only three in the local area.

I'd been looking for Bee Orchids, which we've also got, when I spotted the fern. I think the orchids are fantastic, but the botanist says that they're quite common in the area. **So keep your eyes peeled!!!**



Bee Orchid

Richard Cooper

A pilgrimage for justice in North Yorkshire

Led by the Revd John Howard-Norman, minister at Trinity Methodist Church in Middlesbrough, with the support of Helle Sewell from the Darlington District, the pilgrimage for justice brought together local heritage and reflections on peace, justice and love.

15th July 2025

As pilgrims from across the Darlington District, we gathered for prayer at the beginning of our day's pilgrimage at Stockton Baptist Church, close by to the River Tees. This would be the fourth and final day of our Pilgrimage for Justice. The day's theme was 'Peace', for without peace there can be no justice, and without justice, there can never be peace.

We were reminded of the words of the Prophet Amos: *Let justice roll on like a river, and righteousness like a never-failing stream!* Amos 5:24

Our journey would take us along a four-mile section of the *Eight Bridges Way*, and during the day's walk, we would cross three of those bridges. During his pontificate, the late Pope Francis urged the Church and the world to build bridges rather than walls. The route provided many opportunities for conversation and meditation upon peace and what makes for peace.

Having set off downstream from the church along the northern bank, the first of the three bridges we were to cross came into view. The Infinity Bridge opened in 2009, to pedestrians and cyclists. The reason for its naming was not immediately apparent, until we had crossed to the far bank and looked back at the bridge from a distance, from where we could see the bridge's double arch reflected in the river formed the mathematical symbol for infinity. A wonderful reminder of the infinite nature of God's love and grace, gifted to us by Jesus that invites us to stand against war and violence.



The path followed the river to the Tees Barrage, an innovative piece of engineering designed to prevent flooding and protect the river from pollution. This remarkable project has involved the regeneration of the surrounding green space including the creation of nature reserves and a water-sports facility. We gave thanks to those whose vision had brought about such a wonderful example of making peace with the natural world.

Our pilgrimage along the river continued to the Tees Newport Bridge where we crossed from Stockton-on-Tees to Middlesbrough. The bridge is a formidable steel structure built in the 1930s. Although the central span no longer lifts to allow large ships to pass along the river, it stands as an impressive testament to those who worked in the steel industry and whose story is so much part of the history of Teesside.



We continued along the southern bank, stopping for lunch amidst the spectacular steel dinosaurs of Teesaurus Park, much beloved by young and old alike! Afterwards, we

followed the path through a technology park where companies associated with the rapidly growing aerospace sector have established



The path took us by the ruins of the old salt works that predated steel making in Middlesbrough, before passing the world-famous Transporter Bridge – presently not operating and awaiting a much hoped-for restoration. Our journey's end was in sight! The Riverside Stadium – the home of Middlesbrough Football Club. Reaching it we passed beneath a beautiful and thought-provoking sculpture by Anish Kapoor. The massive artwork, constructed of steel is a tribute to the history of steel making on Teesside. Two giant rings holding a tube of steel mesh in tension. As pilgrims, we were particularly struck by its name; 'Temenos' deriving from Ancient Greek, meaning land set aside for a sanctuary or other holy place.

This had been a day in which we had crossed and seen many bridges and marvelled at the technological wizardry of those who had designed and constructed them. The challenge that I was left with was the realisation that, as a pilgrim, I am not simply called to cross bridges, but to build them too!



Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God
Matthew 5:9

The Methodist Church website

Prayer for September

Lord, here we are in September – a beautiful month at the end of the summer, but before the autumn has taken hold. A month of excitement and new starts for many, a month when courage is needed for our children and young people.

Help us Lord, to know that you are Lord of September; you are Lord and giver of every new month, every new day, every new minute. Help us to put our trust in you for our adventures and for our mundane everyday routines.

You are our generous, loving Father and promise that you will never leave us or forsake us when we trust in you, through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

Amen.

Daphne Kitching
The Parish Pump

**Above all, love each other deeply, because
love covers over a multitude of sins.**

1 Peter 4:8

Our hedgehogs are in crisis

It is feared that there may be just one million hedgehogs left in Britain. This compares to about 36 million during the 1960s. About 150,000 hedgehogs are killed on our roads every year.



With this in mind, England's first 'hedgehog crossing' road signs have been launched in several Borough Councils around the country (including Middlesbrough). The aim is to try and save the species from eventual extinction. The new sign features a hedgehog with white quills inside a red triangle above a message that reads 'hedgehog crossing'.

It is hoped that the signs will make a big difference in preserving the hedgehog population. The aim is to raise awareness among motorists, to get them to slow down, and also among people using a strimmer in their garden.

Other Reasons for the Decline:

Habitat Loss: Urbanization, changes in agricultural practices (like the loss of hedgerows), and the conversion of pasture to arable land have significantly reduced hedgehog habitat. Impermeable garden fencing and walls limits the area of connected land available. Over-tidy gardening can remove dead wood, replace foraging areas with drives and decking and clear away overgrown corners.

Pesticide Use: Pesticides, both in gardens and on farms, can kill hedgehogs and their food sources.

Other Factors: Increased predation (although it's a myth that badgers are the leading cause of decline), and a newly discovered virus may also be contributing to the decline.

The Parish Pump



**British Summer Time ends on
Sunday 26th October 2025**

*Don't forget to put your
clocks back one hour.*



... I take it our local supermarket has a rather good offer on tinned peas at the moment!

Life in the Circus

A couple who worked at the circus wanted to adopt a child. Social workers had doubts about their suitability, but the couple produced photos of their large motorhome, which was equipped with a beautiful nursery. As for education, not only was there a nanny, but also a full-time tutor to teach the child all the usual subjects along with French, Mandarin and computer skills. Finally, the social workers were satisfied and had only one last question. "What age child are you hoping to adopt?"

"Oh, we don't mind at all," the couple assured them. "As long as he or she fits in the cannon."

Children's parties

The main benefit of holding children's parties is to remind yourself that there are children out there who are more awful than your own.

Why you should be careful

The owner of a new sports car was reluctant to allow his wife drive it, even to the local shops. After she insisted, he finally relented, cautioning her as she departed, "Remember, if you have an accident, the newspaper will print your age!"

Garden Produce

A toddler was found in the garden by the steps, chewing on a slug. After the initial surge of disgust his mother asked, "Well . . what does it taste like?"

"The worms by the garage," was the reply.

Already well connected!

The telephone rang in the church office of the church that the MP attended when visiting his constituency. An eager voice inquired: "Do you expect the MP to be in church on Sunday? If so, I was thinking of coming along."

"That," said the clergyman, "I cannot promise. But we do expect that God will be there, and we fancy that that should be incentive enough for a reasonably large attendance."

Economy

The minister asked a member of his congregation, a banker, why he seemed a bit down. The banker replied: "I'm a walking economy! My hairline is in recession, my stomach is a victim of inflation, and both of these together are putting me into a deep depression."

The Parish Pump

StF 121 Autumn Days



What will you be thanking God for this Autumn? At our harvest festivals, we in the Middlesbrough Circuit, with our churches in unmistakable urban areas, thank God every year for food: fruit and vegetables and bread. Years ago in south Wales, and it was probably the case in Durham, there was always a giant lump of coal on the table. Although we didn't plough fields or scatter seed, the coal's stark, dark presence represented energy we relied on and the way most men earned their back-breaking living, underground.

This modern children's hymn written by Estelle White extends the idea of thanking God for the basics of life on a harvest table, to a range of precise poetic images designed to appeal to children's senses of hearing, smell, touch, taste and sight. Just reread and look again at some of those words: The silk inside a chestnut's shell, smell of bacon, comfy battered old shoes, whipped up spray that is rainbow-scattered. The hymn is jam-packed with images and clever rhymes: jewelled/ refuelled.



But it was controversial! Far too modern in 1996 for the choir at the 12th-century St. Mary's Church in Wroxham, Norfolk, who walked out rather than sing the hymn. It made the papers! Apparently the choir found the reference to "jet planes meeting in air to be refuelled," to be inappropriate. I don't suppose they thought the last line's "win for my home team" was suitable either, although it could be claimed many heartfelt partisan "prayers" are uttered at sports matches. Today our eco-church congregations might well be concerned about the climate change implications of both the coal on the table as well as the jet fuel in the song.



It began to be sung in schools in the 70s and 80s as part of the BBC Radio for Schools broadcast, *Come and Praise*. an attempt to update the available materials for compliance with the 1944 UK law requiring state schools to hold a "broadly Christian" act of "collective worship" every day. It was relevant and modern with a catchy chorus yet did more than just praise God, it stimulated pupils' thought and creativity. Because children were singing it in school, churches started using it too as a "song they will know". Which, I imagine, is how it ended up in Singing the Faith.

Estelle White [1925-2011] as well as writing the words, composed the upbeat tune too. She also wrote *Moses I know you're the man StF 473*. Growing up in a musical family on Tyneside she played, piano, guitar, clarinet and tenor saxophone. The saxophone was what she played with a British Army band on many occasions including the 1946 Victory Parade. She also travelled to entertain the troops abroad. As a young woman she loved perfume, drove a sports car and smoked, using a long cigarette holder. After the war, White trained as a physiotherapist at Newcastle on Tyneside, and worked with children who had cerebral palsy. She acted, directed, painted scenery and composed music for productions at the People's Theatre in Newcastle.

The people she knew from her early years led her to a deeper relationship with God, take a look at StF 431. She became a Catholic, and a nun for a short time. White left

the convent in 1970 and taught in Catholic schools in the north of England until she retired. She also wrote articles for the Guardian newspaper and various women's magazines. During this time, she studied Hebrew and Greek, earning an MA with Distinction from Leeds University in 1989. She directed the church choir at St Josephs, Dewsbury, from 1984 until 1991.

This song has beautiful words, and we mustn't forget. No we mustn't forget, to give a great big thank-you to God for all his gifts, and for music, hymns and their composers, like Estelle White.

Ruth Lewis



Accomplish Care and Living in your Own Home *With Care that Feels like Family.*

Juliet and Joseph, who worship with us in Nunthorpe, have started a new Care in the Community Agency: **Accomplish**. Juliet worked as a nurse for a number of years and when she was working in the community, saw there's a real need for people to have access to care for themselves in their own homes. It may well come to us all one day, and if we or our loved ones do need care, it can be daunting to face leaving the familiarity of our own home to be safe.

Accomplish offers a wide range of services for Care in our own home from overnight care, palliative care to maybe just companionship. Juliet says that **Accomplish** has a Mission that whether it is word or deed, they will do it with kindness and compassion. You might need personal care help dressing, showering, or more medical needs like help with taking your medication, wound care, stoma care. Just take a look at their website. <https://www.accomplishcareliving.co.uk> there's a big range of help offered.

As they are based in Nunthorpe, you can contact Juliet by phone 01642 686072 /07955 710198 or on-line, for a friendly chat about what you need help with, and how they can help.

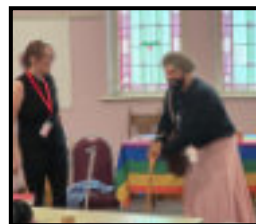
Ruth Lewis

Middlesbrough Methodist Hub & Cleveland Police

The team down at Middlesbrough Methodist Hub, along with support from members of the circuit have been running monthly sessions for Cleveland Police as part of their Faith Trail Training. The Faith Trail Training takes members of Cleveland Police around to different faith communities in Middlesbrough. Each session we provide is attended by around 15 officers and staff, who learn about what Methodism is, what goes on in Methodist Churches and how they can best interact with Methodist communities. We also spend time thinking about how they might be able to better work with us in the community.



We usually begin with an active ‘ice-breaker’ and then hear about Methodism before moving onto some role play and then some case-studies. There is lots of thought provoking conversation as well as lots of laughter - at the last session Revd Charity persuaded Satnam, the EDI officer to dress up as a 97 year old character!



One of the things that officers have been really grateful for is to hear that they are prayed for by us regularly; that we think of them, remember them and pray for them means a lot.

We are really grateful to have these kinds of relationships in Middlesbrough and we are thankful for the help of circuit members who come and make tea and coffee and offer a warm welcome to Cleveland Police. If this is the kind of thing you would like to be involved in email Revd Charity [charity.hamilton@methodist.org.uk].

What's been happening at the hub?

Middlesbrough Methodist Hub in the town centre has had a busy summer!

- The team have been working with Borderlands and Public Health South Tees on an end of life/grief project for communities across Middlesbrough, this has taken a lot of planning and organising but by the time you read this the first two ‘talking spaces’ will have taken place in the café at the Methodist hub. There will be a bigger event at the Town Hall in October so watch this space!
- Police Training, we have hosted and delivered training to police officers from across the Cleveland Police force.
- Supporting others; we’ve supported individuals and organisations in the town centre who might be struggling or who just need a little extra care often through small acts of kindness.
- We’ve attended anti-extremism training in Stockton.

- We have welcomed and hosted the connexional ‘flourishing in ministry’ officer Corin Pilling and planned his time in Middlesbrough and the Darlington District.
- We have marked the one year anniversary since the violent riots that broke out in Middlesbrough last year, this was marked by an event in Middlesbrough Town Hall which the team and Revd John attended and at which Revd Charity was one of the speakers. This period of time has involved lots of preparation, working with other agencies and doing the dreaded radio interviews!
Riot-recovery work is ongoing in Middlesbrough and plays a big part in the networks and relationships that we have built.
- We had a break from Pub Theology over August but prior to that had some great meetings together. Pub theology is meant to act not just as a space for deep ‘God-talk’ but also as a very public presence of the Church in the marketplace.

These are just a handful of things that have been going on in the town centre, if you want to get involved please get in touch. We meet weekly to pray together, on other days we walk around the town centre, take people for coffee’s, attend meetings, run events. This is your project in the town centre and we would love to show you round the town some time and introduce you to some of the people and places we love.

Coming up at the hub

Coming up at the hub

Wednesday 3rd December 2025 10.00am – 3.30pm

We are running an advent day for the District Methodist Women in Britain.

“Look to the stars; a day exploring hope on the edges of ‘Boro’”

Rev Charity Hamilton

The unlikely helper to red squirrels

Red squirrels have found a surprising friend in their fight to survive against grey squirrels. It is the elusive pine martin, who is a natural predator of *all* squirrels.

Now a recent study by Queen’s University, Belfast, has found that pine martens are increasing, and that they kill more grey squirrels than red squirrels. This is because red squirrels are naturally wary of pine martens, and so avoid them.

Grey squirrels, on the other hand, do not know to fear pine martens, as they are not native to the UK.

It is good news for the beleaguered red squirrels, who have been nearly wiped out since their larger North American cousins arrived in the late 19th century. Most red squirrels these days are confined in small populations in Scotland, Anglesey and the Isle of Wight.





In Flanders Fields

In Flanders' fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place: and in the sky The
larks, still bravely singing, fly Scarce
heard amid the guns below.

We are the dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders' fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe;
To you from failing hands we throw The
torch; be yours to hold it high,
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders' Fields.

*In the spring of 1915, shortly after losing a friend in Ypres, a Canadian doctor, **Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae** wrote his now famous poem after seeing poppies growing in battle-scarred fields.*

www.britishlegion.org.uk

House Naming



Many people name their homes, and there is certainly a dizzying variety of names out there.

But now a new study has found that nearly all the most common property names have something to do with nature. And in Britain, the most popular house name of all is short and sweet: 'The Cottage'. Next in line? 'Rose Cottage'.

Other popular house names include Ivy Cottage, Garden Cottage, Orchard Cottage, Yew Tree Cottage, The Barn, The Stables, Orchard House, The Lodge and The Granary. Dr Lynn Robson, Fellow in English at Regent's Park College, Oxford said the trend seems "to reflect a nostalgia for a rural past."

The survey also found that Newcastle has the greatest number of named homes, followed by Glasgow and Sheffield. The survey was carried out by Admiral Home Insurance.

Parish Pump

September, October and November Flowers and their Meanings

September: Aster and Morning Glory



Also known as starworts or frost flowers, **Asters** are a symbol of all-powerful love, wisdom and royalty. Because of this, they are a traditional 20th wedding anniversary gift. They are originally named after the Greek word for star and the flower's shape is reminiscent of a star.

Morning glory have a long history of medicinal use, treating everything from headaches to rheumatism. But these colourful blooms are also known to represent unrequited love, affection, and the fleeting beauty of life, so they're perfect for this transitional month. Their petals open in the morning, hence their name, to show off their beautiful, star-like centres.



October: Marigold and Cosmos

The **Marigold** is fitting for this month with its golden blooms that match the colour of the autumn season. Marigolds symbolize fierce love, passion and creativity. In addition to their beauty, marigolds also have a long tradition of being used medicinally to heal inflammation and skin problems. These blooms are largely present in Indian wedding traditions as they are used to bestow brightness on the newlyweds.



Like the balancing scales of the Libra zodiac sign, the bright **Cosmos** flowers represent inner peace and equilibrium. This birth flower has been grown and cultivated for centuries and was beloved by the ancient Mayan people for its beauty and healing properties. They come in bright colours like orange, pink and purple.



November: Chrysanthemum and Peonies



The meaning of **Chrysanthemum** which was first cultivated in China around the 15th century is loyalty, joy and longevity. This bloom is also one of the national flowers of Japan, where it's the emblem of the imperial family and a sign of health and longevity. Chinese culture holds that chrysanthemums can promote a longer life and ward off grey hair.

Like their petals, **Peonies** have a layered meaning. Historically they've symbolized shame, but today they impart hope for a long life or a happy marriage when used in wedding florals. Peonies can also be used to convey passion and high spirits.



Constant kindness can accomplish much. As the sun makes ice melt, kindness causes misunderstanding, mistrust and hostility to evaporate. – *Albert Schweitzer*

He gave us eyes to see them

El Greco's 'The Tears of St Peter'

In the 19th century John Bowes, the 10th Earl of Strathmore, built a museum in the French style, with landscaped gardens, at Barnard Castle in Teesdale. He bequeathed it 800 paintings, including a previously unknown Van Dyck.

But visitors to the Bowes Museum often make a beeline for its amazing 18th century silver swan automaton. As the music plays, there is the illusion of flowing water: the swan preens itself, bends down and catches a fish in the water. It is a thrill and a joy to watch. At the other extreme and striking a different mood and emotion is El Greco's painting of 1580: 'The Tears of St Peter.' It was reluctantly purchased in 1869 for a price less than that paid for the monkey puzzle tree in the grounds outside.

The gospels tell us that St Peter wept bitterly when he heard the cock crow, as he had denied knowing Jesus three times. El Greco shows the saint, his eyes welling with those tears of betrayal, kneeling and turning to heaven for forgiveness. The sky is overcast, reflecting the sad scene below, and we can see ivy growing as a sign of the constancy so lacking in Peter's life.



At the Last Supper he had been the opposite: ready to follow, brave and generous with his words. But Peter leaves Jesus to drink the cup of sorrow alone in Gethsemane. In the courtyard of the high priest, warming himself by the fire, he utters that threefold denial. This was the lowest moment in his life, when instead of being solid rock, he showed that he was merely shifting sand.

And then the wonder and glory of Easter. We glimpse it in the background of the painting with the angel and Mary Magdalene at the tomb. And we know that everything changes for Peter by the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Like the silver swan in the Bowes Museum looking for fish, the disciples have returned to their old way of life.

But it is the risen Lord who directs them to a marvellous catch, and the charcoal fire of betrayal in the courtyard is now the charcoal fire of breakfast, a new day, and a new way of life for Peter. No denial now – he answers the three questions of our Lord positively and realises that he is loved by Jesus in his failure and weakness. It might have seemed the end for Peter in the courtyard, but the risen Lord comes to tell him 'I make all things new' and that includes you.

Peter is often known as the stumbling saint. Here, in El Greco's painting, he has stumbled and fallen to his knees in prayer. As we look at him, we know ourselves to be as weak and fearful. But the Lord comes to us as He comes to Peter. He lifts us up and puts us back on our feet again. With Peter, we know Him as our crucified and risen Lord.

The Parish Pump

ECO Update

Grove Hill

We have a thriving wild flower garden at the side of church which gives us much pleasure to see. There are also many bugs attracted to the plants which is so good for the environment. We also planted a flower garden at the front of the church and put a bird table in place. The flowers really have grown well and enhance this part of our church grounds and have attracted positive comments from passers-by.

We have made two bat boxes but we are liaising with Cleveland Bat Association before we put them up.

In May I adhered to 'No Mow May' by leaving some parts of our lawn uncut to encourage wild life and to look more natural. It was a difficult job for our lawn mower cutting down the long grass.

We now have a recycling bin for used ink cartridges and another one for used batteries on the way.

We would like one day to be in a position to install solar panels on the church roof, but this may be well in the future.

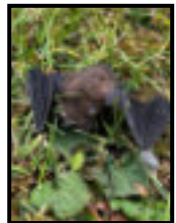
Overall, we do believe we have established a positive eco culture within our church family and see the important link to our faith.

Dave Elliott

Nunthorpe

Recently a member of the congregation spied a bat in church and with some skilful work by Keith with a dustpan and brush it was captured and released on the grass outside church.

No belfry but we certainly have bats! We are now hoping to install a few bat boxes in our surrounding trees



Kay Braithwaite



Fish and chips

A group of tourists touring the north of England stopped to visit a Priory. The Prior gave them a tour of the buildings, ending in the kitchen, where one monk was making fish and chips. One tourist said brightly: "You must be the fish friar," to which the monk gravely replied, "No, I am the chip monk."

MONTPELLIER MANOR CHAPLAINCY NEWS

Welcome to our first Chaplaincy Newsletter.

The year seems to be flying by with so many wonderful connections and events happening here at Montpellier Manor and in our community.

We are now welcoming the congregation from Stainton Chapel for A Community Church service on the first Sunday of the month at 3pm at Montpellier Manor, conducted by circuit Ministers.

The congregation at Stainton have been so kind and gifted us many lovely items when the Chapel closed (see P9) These are used in our Sacred Space, linking church and community.

We also have Rev Laura and Rev Vanessa from St Peter and St Pauls in Stainton leading Café church on the second Wednesday of the month. This is a very relaxed and interactive worship session.

July has seen us welcome our Chaplaincy volunteer Cathryn. She brings over 30 years' experience in counselling within the voluntary sector and worked as a support group facilitator and trainer. More recently she has supported people in exploring their spirituality through creative practices and connecting with nature. Cathryn will be volunteering on Mondays and Wednesdays.

Below is a calendar of events planned from September -November.

You are most welcome to join us for any services and events.

SEPTEMBER

September 7th Community church with Stainton 3pm

September 15th Launching Harvest Appeal, this year will be both human food needs and Animal needs. We are calling it the Saint Francis harvest Appeal, (as Feast of Saint Francis is on 4th October). Food items to be donated to Eco Shop Middlesbrough

September 17th Communion and afternoon Tea to Thank Stainton

Congregation for gifts given to us for the Sacred space. Afternoon tea at 2pm, followed by Communion service at 3pm

September 24th Blessing of Hands (Staff & Volunteers hands blessed for their work) 3pm
Sacred Space, Montpellier Manor

OCTOBER

October 5th Combined Montpellier Harvest Festival and Community Church with Stainton. We are hoping to donate our Food collection to the Eco shop in Middlesbrough. 3pm

October Tuesday 21st Diwali an opportunity to bring communities together, learn about different cultures. This will be led by Barbara (Chaplain) and Charu our Volunteer. From 10am onwards.

NOVEMBER

November 2nd Community Church 3pm

November 9th Remembrance Day Service at Montpellier Manor 11am

Did you spot many butterflies this pa

The wildlife charity Butterfly Conservation is deeply worried about our butterflies. Or rather, the lack of them. It seems that more than 80 per cent of our species have declined sharply in number since 1970s.



Each summer sees the Big Butterfly Count, when the public is encouraged to send in the number of butterflies they have seen over a short period of time. Last year saw the lowest number of butterflies spotted in the count's 14-year history. Even the familiar species like the small white, common blue and small tortoiseshell had their worst summer ever. And a record number of people saw no butterflies at all.

Butterflies have been hit by climate change, the use of pesticides, and damage to their habitats. The drought this summer will have been bad news for their caterpillar offspring, which need growing plants to feed on.

So, this autumn, why not plan a happier year for butterflies in 2026? As you prepare your garden for winter, go to <https://www.rhs.org.uk/wildlife/butterflies-in-your-garden> for some ideas of how to make your garden butterfly-friendly.

Nunthorpe Methodist Church's Christmas fayre

On Saturday 29th November
at 10.00am - 12.30pm

Quality Bric-a-brac, Books, Christmas Gifts, Knitted Goods,
Crafts, Cakes

Father Christmas, Tombola, Jams & Pickles and lots more ...

Seasonal Refreshments

Answers to Quiz on Page 4

- | | |
|-----------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Keats | 2. Carole King |
| 3. Hoglet | 4. 11th November |
| 5. Amos | 6. The Jarrow March (Crusade) |

P R A Y E R D I A R Y

September 7th Pray today for all our Circuit on this the first Sunday of our new Methodist year. Pray for the Preachers' meeting tomorrow, and our Communion Service. Pray for Rev David Godfrey and Nunthorpe

September 14th Pray for children and teachers returning to school for a new year. Pray too for School and College Governors. Pray for Rev John Howard-Norman and Grove Hill.

September 21st Pray for the Circuit Men's Fellowship on Friday. Pray for all church groups bringing people together socially. Pray for Rev Charity Hamilton and the Middlesbrough Mission team.

September 28th Pray for Harvest Festival services celebrating God's goodness, but also reminding us of the need to share with those less well off than ourselves. Pray for Rev Anne Coates and Marton.

October 5th Pray for the Plan meeting on Tuesday as we meet to prepare our church services. Pray for all who preach, both Lay and Ordained. Pray for those who may be thinking of God's call to preach that they may have the courage to act upon that call. Pray for Normanby

October 12th Pray for young people going off to college and university, some leaving home for the first time. Be with their parents and families as they support them from home. Pray for Elaine at the Circuit Office. Pray for Trinity Family Friendly Centre and all involved in that outreach and mission. **October**

19th Pray for all who are ill in body, mind or spirit, those in hospital and homes and those in their own homes. Bless those who care for them professionally and those who care for loved ones. Pray

for David Everitt our Circuit Webmaster and especially those who prepare Worship at Home.

October 26th Pray for the Circuit meetings and all who are members of that meeting that they may be inspired by the Holy Spirit in all their decision making. Pray for TC Luk and the Chinese Church

November 2nd Pray today for the memory of loved ones no longer with us. Pray that we might thank God for all these saints and the special example they have left us. Pray for the Methodist Asylum Project, for Billy Barnes the Project Manager and his team.

November 9th Pray for those who are our senior citizens and for what they still continue to do in our churches. Pray for those who have had to go into Care. Pray for Methodist Homes for the Aged Communities Teesside at Montpelier Manor, for Barbara Robinson their Chaplain and for the worship being held there.

November 16th Pray for all who work with children and young people in our churches. Pray for Mark Braithwaite our Circuit Safeguarding Officer. Pray for Middlesbrough Methodist Hub and Andrew Glazebrook the Project Manager.

November 23rd Pray for those working in our communities around our churches as we seek to reach out to them with the good news of Jesus. Pray for Rev Rachel Williams

November 30th Pray for Rev Richard Andrew President of the Methodist Conference and for all the churches in the Connexion. Pray too for Acting Chairs of District; Rev Beverly Hollings and Rev John Squares.