

THE

June, July & August 2024

# ELBOW

The Magazine of Formby Methodist Church

Joy  
for all

## ***From the Editor***

Summer is just about here - amazingly nearly half the year has gone already! So that means we're nearly halfway through our 150th celebrations! See p10 for details of our events so far. But there's still a lot to come - see pp12,13.

Perhaps the highlight of the year of celebration - and certainly the one which has required the most planning and organisation - is the Flower Festival (see p12 and back cover). This will be over four days and will require a lot of help from Church members. So if you can help with stewarding or home baking, and haven't already done so, please speak to Vicky. But if you are unable to offer your services, do still come along and enjoy what will be a spectacular display. You will not be disappointed!

And there is still a lot more to come after that. Our Anniversary will be celebrated on Sunday 14 July, when our service will be led by Mrs Carolyn Godfrey, Vice President of the Methodist Conference; this will be followed by an Anniversary lunch (see also p13).

As always, my thanks to lots of people - Graham Watts for his beautiful 'Elbow' covers, and indeed the various posters he has designed during our Anniversary year, Helen for all her help with the preparation, printing and distribution of the 'Elbow' and also those who have contributed articles for it. And a special thanks to the 150 Team for all their help in planning our various events; thanks also to all those who have helped make the 150th events so successful in other ways, including all those who have helped serve refreshments on the night - I think we have now got that one down to a fine art!

I sincerely hope you have enjoyed our anniversary programme so far, and will continue to support our future events.

### **Circuit Listening Event, 30th June**

Following the morning service on Sunday 30th June we have been invited to meet with members of the Circuit Leadership Team (CLT) for an informal discussion about issues facing the Circuit and how we respond to these going forward. The meeting will last no more than an hour over coffee. A letter from Stephen Hardiman (Senior Circuit Steward), introducing the meeting, is being circulated. We hope that as many people as possible will be able to attend.

*Tim (on behalf of the Church Stewards)*

# SERVICES AT ELBOW LANE

26 May, 10.30	Trinity Sunday Service	Miss Lesley Goddard
2 June, 10.30	Holy Communion	Rev Ernie Grimshaw
9 June, 10.30	Climate Sunday Service	Rev Sheila Prest
16 June, 10.30	Morning Service	Miss Lesley Goddard
16 June, 6.30	Evening Service	Rev Marie-Anne Kent
23 June, 8.30	Holy Communion	Rev Marie-Anne Kent
23 June, 10.30	Morning Service	Rev Marie-Anne Kent
30 June, 10.30	Morning Service	Rev Derek Bowker
7 July, 10.30	Holy Communion	Rev Sheila Prest
<b>14 July, 10.30</b>	<b>Church 150th Anniversary Service and Anniversary lunch</b>	<b>Rev Carolyn Godfrey, Vice President, Methodist Conference</b>
21 July, 10.30	Circuit Service (and Farewell Service for Superintendent Minister Rev Marie-Anne Kent)	St Philip & St Paul with Wesley, Scarisbrick Road, Southport
21 July, 6.30	Evening Service	Rev Ian Hu
28 July, 8.30	Holy Communion	TBA
28 July, 10.30	Morning Service	Mrs Debs Attwater
4 Aug, 10.30	Holy Communion	Rev Sheila Prest
11 Aug, 10.30	Morning Service	TBA
18 Aug, 10.30	Morning Service	Rev Derek Bowker
18 Aug, 6.30	Holy Communion	Rev Martin Abrams
25 Aug, 8.30	Holy Communion	TBA
25 Aug, 10.30	Morning Service	TBA

NB Rev Marie-Anne's final service will be on 21 July.  
There will be no morning service at Elbow Lane that day

## ***Our Minister's Letter***

Hi Everyone

We are living in challenging times, are we not? Not just in our churches, but in our world. Yet the example of the woman anointing Jesus' feet with expensive perfume was the epitome of extravagance beyond our imagining. She was compelled to offer all she had in that one loving act in response to God's love towards her. Extravagance and risk taking and generosity beyond measure is a calling by God. Our Methodist tradition includes a belief in "the priesthood of all believers". In other words, our church families are encouraged to enable those lay people within our midst to release those skills and abilities which we inherently have, oftentimes remaining dormant, for use in the furtherance of the kingdom of God. Could you become a missional partner in God's plan for Formby Methodist Church?

Let me explain. It is a fact that the number of presbyters available for service is declining year on year. Southport Circuit is no different from other circuits throughout the connexion in that trained ministers are not as prevalent as in past decades. Formby Church is thriving but only due to the fact that we have a small group of committed and trusted people who dedicate their lives to serving our community. They need help. How can we help and best answer the call to serve, continue to be missional, adhere to our Methodist roots and maintain a thriving Christian presence here?

Well, here is your opportunity to take a risk and be extravagantly generous. Our churches are all unique and made up of individuals with different skills and calling. I ask the question: Do you feel called to serve in some small or large capacity in our church? If so, there is an opportunity to begin to look in more depth as to the direction that this may lead us, as we contemplate our future together as one. How might we achieve our aims, which are to further our mission working with our church councils and under their authority in order to fulfil our calling. On your membership ticket is the term "OUR CALLING". It mentions the areas which underpin what we as Methodists are all about. They are fourfold and read as follows :-"Learning and Caring", "Worship", "Mission and Evangelism" and "Service". These are all fundamental to our beliefs and enable us to release our talents and inherent God given gifts for use in God's service.

Folk who come forward to offer themselves will be supported during their exploration of their calling. This will be a time of discernment on their part, followed by a period of matching their gifts to the wishes and desires of our church and church council. Appropriate training will be offered and people will be nurtured and guided through the process.

It could be that by Sept 2025 Elbow Lane could look like an even better place. Planting these seeds in a fertile soil may give us all the opportunity to see new buds forming and new shoots appearing in the future to enable us to flourish and grow in new ways and secure a Christian presence in our neighbourhood.

Finally, please spread the word, pray, encourage everyone to search their hearts and ask the questions:-

*“Are you willing to take a risk” and*

*“Are you willing to follow the call and release those gifts which are individual to you and are God given?”*

*“Can you offer with extravagant generosity?”*

Love and peace

*Sheila*

### **!!Wonderful News!!**

**It has just been announced that our Minister, Rev Sheila Prest, will be staying with us for the next three years!! This is fantastic news for our Church - Sheila has been an invaluable asset during the past two years, and we look forward to her ministry during the next three years and her guidance through the challenges it will bring.**

### **AND A THANK YOU FROM OUR TREASURER**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the whole Church family for their ongoing generosity which has helped stabilise our finances after a very difficult time during the period of lockdowns. Thank you also to those who have increased their giving as this helps offset increasing costs and the decreasing value of our money (due to recent high levels of inflation). £1 in 2019 is now worth only 80p and this has reduced the real worth of our giving. As our overall income has decreased in recent years, you are once again encouraged to prayerfully consider whether you are able to increase your offering.

The latest Tax Year has just finished and this can be a busy, challenging and interesting time for Accountants and Treasurers - or about as interesting as it gets! A significant task is the submission of the annual Gift Aid claim from HMRC and, with the help of Bill Roberts, this has just been completed for the 2023/24 Tax Year. Although the Gift Aid is worth £10,000 a year to the Church, it is still over a £1,000 a year less than could actually be claimed. Can I therefore once again ask those taxpayers who currently give their offerings anonymously in cash to consider moving to either the Envelope Scheme or Bank Standing Order?

To clarify anything to do with your financial giving to our Church, please speak to me or contact me: [mark1973@btinternet.com](mailto:mark1973@btinternet.com) or 07525 056656.

*Mark Pickering, Treasurer*





## Events So Far .....

As of the last week of May, we have had four commemorative events in church. Happily, all have been successful - good attendances, good feedback, and a significant amount raised for Church funds.



Two Liverpool legends ensured that the year of celebration got off to a good start - on 7th March, in conjunction with Formby Civic Society, Joan Rimmer & Stephen Gerrard gave a thoroughly enjoyable presentation, in word and song, entitled '*Formby Past & Present*'.



This was followed a fortnight later by an extremely lively evening of singing, when the '*Love Train*' stopped off at Elbow Lane. Three choirs took part, under their distinctive and expert conductor Steve Cook - G:Force Gospel Choir and two from Formby High School.

The quality of the singing and enthusiasm of the performers was infectious.

And the faces of the audience as they left



was a joy to behold - everyone, young and old, had thoroughly enjoyed themselves. It was a truly memorable evening.



The next event, in April, was an evening of **'Magic and Mayhem!'**, expertly performed by the Houghton Singers from Southport, who entertained us, in words and music, with the fascinating story of the lives of Gilbert & Sullivan.

And on 10th May, we were indeed privileged to welcome to Elbow Lane another legend, Professor Ian Tracey (Liverpool Cathedral organist, organist to the City of Liverpool, Liverpool Phil, to mention only a few!) along with Jack Watson (tenor), whose cv is as wide-ranging as it is impressive! During the first half, Ian displayed his virtuoso talent on the organ, getting sounds out of it which yours truly never knew existed! In the second half, Ian accompanied Jack on the piano as he sang some 20th century classics. The church was virtually full and judging by their comments afterwards, everyone thoroughly enjoyed the concert. Ian has since told me how much they too enjoyed their visit to Elbow Lane - and that they would be delighted to accept my invitation to return next year!!!

*(Alastair)*







## **..... and Still to Come!**

Two further concerts have been arranged. On 25th June, we will welcome the Sefton Ladies Choir. Formed in 1985 as a choir for female voices, they first met in the Smithy Green Community Centre, before relocating to Elbow Lane Methodist Church in 2005, where they still meet for practice every Tuesday evening at 7.45 - new members always welcome. They have already performed on various occasions at Elbow Lane.



Then on 11th October, the distinguished Aughton Male Voice Choir (Lancashire Choir of the year 2022) will be our visitors. They will sing a variety of songs old and new, accompanied by a guest lady soloist - so that will certainly be an evening not to be missed.

**STOP PRESS! There may be an extra event!! Details have yet to be finalised, but plans are underway, in conjunction with Formby Civic Society, for a Celtic evening, in words and song, on Thursday 14th November, featuring two prominent Church members!! Watch out for further details!**

But before all of these, we will have a very different event - lasting all of four days! For the first time for many years, we will be having a Flower Festival at Elbow Lane. This will run from Thursday 6th until Sunday 9th June (see back cover for more details).

It will be accompanied by an exhibition of memorabilia and photographs relating to our Church and the Elbow Lane area. Craft items produced by the Church Craft Group will be on sale and refreshments will be available. There will be free admission so all donations will be very welcome - please give generously!!

We have already requested help to steward the event over the four days and had a good response, but if you haven't already offered your services, they would still be welcomed - just speak to Vicky Jenions or myself. Contributions of home baking would also be appreciated.

*Alastair*





## **Church Anniversary, 14th July**

The Church Anniversary this year will be a rather different affair. Firstly, the date is not the usual one. Traditionally, though by no means always - I have found that on occasions it was celebrated in June and even October! - it has been held on the first Sunday of July, to celebrate the Anniversary of the laying of the foundation stone of our Church. This year, however, to accommodate our distinguished speaker, it has been moved to the following Sunday.

Our Anniversary Service this year will be conducted by the Vice President of the Methodist Conference, Mrs Carolyn Godfrey. The service will be followed by a special Anniversary lunch, to which everyone is cordially invited; however, we will need a list of names of those attending in due course - further details will follow shortly.



Hopefully we will be joined for this by some past members and also clergy - Rev Geoff Barnard, for example, will be one of our guest speakers. It should be a very special day in the history and life of our Church.

It is one of three special services to mark the 150th Anniversary. The first of these was held on Easter Sunday, and we were delighted to welcome Rev Dr Sheryl Anderson to lead it. Sheryl has been a tremendous help to us at Elbow Lane, especially during the difficult years of the late 2010's (see also p14). Sadly, as she is about to retire, this will have been the last service which she will conduct at Elbow Lane.

Our third special commemorative service will be held on 6th October, and will be led by Rev David Somerville who, as Presbyterian at Moor Lane, often preached at Elbow Lane. It will mark the 150th anniversary of the first service in our Church.

*Alastair*

## **Liverpool Methodist District Synod**

### **Ainsdale Methodist Church April 28<sup>th</sup> 2024**

This was a good day to meet up with friends, renew old acquaintances and look forward to whatever lies ahead. Irene and I felt it was good to share a table with Barbara Briddock, Carol Shanks and Rev Ernie Grimshaw. Many thanks to the members of Ainsdale Church for making us so welcome and providing tea, coffee & cake during the day. There was a presentation on the work of the Together Liverpool initiative 'Network of Kindness' which I am hoping we will hear more of in the weeks and months to come.

Various Resolutions were discussed and recommended, but it was also a day tinged with sadness as it was the last ever Liverpool District Synod as we become part of the newly formed North West of England District in September; we also saw the closure of the Bread Church which has done amazing outreach work in the city centre.

And with heavy hearts we bade farewell as a synod to our District Chair, Rev Dr Sheryl Anderson. There will of course be several occasions over the next few months that individual circuits and churches will say their special farewells but this was the official District Synod recognition of all that Sheryl has meant and achieved for us in her 10 year tenure in Merseyside. There was no shortage of



emotion during the day and Irene and I were particularly reminded of all that Sheryl did for Formby and the Crosby Circuit when we could be described as 'rudderless'.

But the day was not all tears as, to mark the occasion, we shared in a delicious cake made by Rev David Somerville's daughter Fiona. And the highlight was the formal presentation of a gift which, when unwrapped, revealed a 'Doddy' tickling stick with which Patrick Evans dubbed Sheryl 'an honorary Scouser'.

A day to remember for those who deemed it a privilege to be there.

Liz Morris

## **LADIES FELLOWSHIP**

We continue to grow in number and enjoy our Thursday afternoons, ably led by Janet and Margaret. We appreciate Angela's contribution in playing the piano and Judith & Sue who provide us with refreshments every week. We are grateful that Bill Roberts sets up the room for us each week and Alan Sullivan has very kindly offered to help us with putting away tables and chairs after our meeting.

Our first speaker in April was Rev Patrick Evans who shared his personal experience of visiting Haiti some years ago. It was a very interesting, educational and moving afternoon, especially with the present situation in that country. We have been so pleased to welcome back into our midst Audrey Wright, who kindly entertained us with much laughter as she read some of her 'Amusing Verse' - such talent! Rev Ernie & Nicky Grimshaw entertained us with their experience of learning to speak French and living in France for many years, and once again 'Maggie & Mandy' had us raising the roof with our voices, as we supported them in raising funds for the important work of Macmillan.

### **Programme**

- 30 May Rev Ian Hu - 'Famous Women Hymn Writers'
- 6 June '150 Flower Festival' in our church
- 13 June Nigel Mawdsley - 'My Music'
- 20 June Beetle Drive
- 27 June 'Methodist Women in Britain' Strawberry Tea
- 4 July Irene Watts - 'Confession of a Minister's Wife'
- 11 July Joe Riley - 'Why Do Local Newspapers Matter?'
- 18 July Rev Sheila Prest
- 25 July AGM and Quiz/Musical Bingo

We extend a very warm welcome to anyone who would like to join us any Thursday afternoon.

Irene Watts (876219)

### **Two Church Notices - but not quite as intended!**

"The church's AGM will be held on 12<sup>th</sup> May"

"While the Minister is away, messages can be given to the Church Secretary"





## **Night Time in the Forest**

Listen, listen and what do you hear?  
The screech of an owl reaching into the night  
As if warning his prey he's about to strike.  
A scuffling badger in search of her food  
Waiting, watching protecting her brood.  
The breeze softly touching the leaves of the trees  
As it makes its way over land, over seas.  
Look, keep looking and what do you see?  
Long tall trees much bigger than me.  
The irregular line where the sky meets the land  
Yet all this was made by God's own hand.  
And crowning it all a round yellow moon  
Shines into the darkness showing the way  
As each creature waits for the approach of the day.  
Wonder, wonder do you wonder why  
He gives us such blessings on land and in sky?  
Sometimes we forget we've had all this so long.  
We forget, we forget this is the Lord's song.  
A song that tells us what he is like.  
He's tall and majestic, He's gentle and kind  
And if you look at the stillness His peace you will find.

*Ivy Chapple*

## **Can you find the names of 16 books of the Bible below?**

I once made a remark about the hidden books of the Bible. It was a lulu, kept people looking so hard for facts, and for others it was a revelation. Some were in a jam, especially since the names of the books were not capitalised. But the truth struck home to numbers of our readers, to others it was a real job. We want it to be a most fascinating, few moments for you. Yes, there will be some really easy ones to spot. Others may require judges to help them. I will quickly admit it usually takes a minister to find one of them, and then there will be loud lamentations when it is found. A little lady says she brews a cup of tea so she can concentrate better. See how well you can compete. Relax not, for there are sixteen names of the books of the Bible in this paragraph.

*(Answers next time!)*

## God in Music

### *‘Glorious the song when God’s the theme’: the ‘Stabat Mater’*

May is traditionally the month of Mary, the mother of Jesus. When we read of Mary in the Gospels, we sense the heartache and trial of much of her life: a teenage mother giving birth in a stable, fleeing with her newborn baby and Joseph to Egypt, losing the child Jesus while on pilgrimage to Jerusalem, following her son on His ministry but always in the background, and there at the foot of the cross as her son is crucified. Mary must then have thought back to that occasion in the temple when Simeon took her child and told her that a sword would pierce her own soul.

That sense of heartache and the sorrow it brings is poignantly expressed in a beautiful poem of the Middle Ages called *Stabat Mater*, which pictures Mary at Calvary and that sword of desolation and sadness that pierces her soul. We are not sure who wrote this poem. It is ascribed to Jacopone da Todi, who became a Franciscan friar on the death of his wife in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The contemplation of Mary’s sorrows in the *Stabat Mater* has inspired many composers, and there are wonderful settings by Palestrina, Rossini, Dvorak, Verdi and Poulenc.

But let us focus on a very simple setting, which nevertheless captures those searing pangs of sorrow at the heart of the poem. It is by Antonio Vivaldi, who was born in Venice in 1678. In 1703 he was ordained a priest,



but by then he had made his name as a skilled violinist and composer. He continued to compose throughout his life: a vast amount that includes some 40 operas (though only 18 survive), 400 concertos, and over 100 choral works. In 1730 Charles de Brosses described him as “an old man with a prodigious fury for composition.” For much of his life Vivaldi was music director of the Ospedale della Pieta, a music school for girls. Then in 1740 he left Venice hoping for preferment in Vienna. That was not to be, and his final days were marked by poverty, and in 1741 burial in a pauper’s grave.



Most of us know Vivaldi through the brilliance and colour of *'The Four Seasons'* and his setting of the *'Gloria'*. The tone is more restrained in his setting of the *'Stabat Mater'*. There is a very fine CD recording entitled *'Vespers of Sorrow'* where the work is linked to a sonata, a psalm setting and the Magnificat for an imagined celebration of our Lady's feast.

The *Stabat Mater* is a long poem and Vivaldi restricted himself to setting eight verses for contralto and strings: the solo voice standing for Mary as she sings of the despair and agony as the mother of Jesus. The opening verse, *'At the cross her station keeping'* captures the intensity of emotion with the throbbing rhythms of the accompaniment – that mood recurs throughout the work. And then with the verse, *'Eja Mater, fons amoris'* (*O thou Mother! Fount of love!*) the violins and viola accompany without any bass instruments. It is a pivotal point in the work as the solo voice cries out *'Mater'* across the heights and depths of the music, leading into the prayer that the love of Mary will touch all human hearts. The final verse set by Vivaldi begins *'Make me feel as thou hast felt'*, and so Mary stands for all mothers who have lost loved ones: perhaps sons killed in Afghanistan, perhaps daughters dying through disease.

Mary's love for Jesus, her son, touches the hearts of them and of all parents. Hers was a protective, sacrificial love that led her to the foot of the cross, where Jesus gave His mother and John, the beloved disciple, into the care of each other. The sacrificial love of a mother mirrored in the sacrificial offering of her son in death.

Julian of Norwich meditated on this motherly love in her Revelations. In chapter 60 she wrote, *'A mother's caring is the closest, nearest and surest for it is the truest...As we know, our own mother bore us only into pain and dying. But our true mother Jesus, who is all love, bears us into joy and endless living. Blessed may he be!'*

So the protective care of mother Mary cries out to us in Vivaldi's setting of the *Stabat Mater*. The closing lines of that poem look to Christ's maternal love like Mother Julian:

*'Christ when Thee shall call me hence,  
Be my mother, my defence,  
Be thy Cross of victory.'*

*(from the Parish Pump)*



# Rodeo RAMBLE

Reducing poverty step by step...


**Sunday 9th June 2024**

**12pm - 3pm**


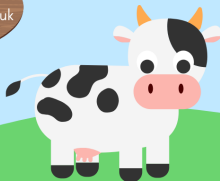
Grab your hat, strap up your boots and get ready to kick up some dust with Compassion Acts, at our first Rodeo Ramble. Join us for a 2K or 4K walk through the countryside followed by a post-walk fare at a working barn - including refreshments, children's activities and a prize for best dressed Cowboy or girl! All money raised goes directly to funding our essential projects.

**Gates open at 12pm, walk starts at 1pm.**


**Food and drink available until 3pm.**



Email us to get started!  
[hello@compassionacts.uk](mailto:hello@compassionacts.uk)



Adults - £10  
Families - £20  
**Group discount!**



The Main Barn  
The Moss Formby L37 0AQ  
Pre booked walkers only.

**COMPASSION ACTS**

[www.compassionacts.uk/fundraise](http://www.compassionacts.uk/fundraise)  
Registered charity number 1172948



# HOLIDAY AT HOME

**5<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> August 2024**

## **FOR OLDER ADULTS IN FORMBY, HIGHTOWN & INCE BLUNDELL**

Formby Befriending Scheme, with support from Churches Together and other community groups and individuals, is once again offering a 'Holiday at Home' for older adults in Formby, Hightown and Ince Blundell. The main aim of the fortnight is to give people who are no longer able to go on holiday, the opportunity to have a 'holiday experience' in their own community.

Last year, many will remember that we were overwhelmed with people wanting to book events and, unfortunately, many were disappointed. And so, this year, we have introduced a Booking Request Form which you will receive along with the printed programmes. You will be asked to prioritise the four events you would most like to attend and we will then do our best to ensure everyone gets to go to at least one or two of their top choices.

On Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> July we will hold a Coffee Afternoon when confirmation of the events on offer will be available. This will also be an opportunity to pay for any events that require pre-payment. After this date, you can contact us by phone to check bookings or arrange another time to make payments.

We aim to provide transport at no extra cost for those needing assistance in order to attend events. You will need to request transport on your Booking Request Form so that we can give the local taxi company enough notice.

Holiday at Home programmes will be available early in July and can be picked up from Churches, the library and other locations in the area. Our sincere thanks go to all those who are hosting a Holiday at Home event. We look forward to seeing you in August and another great holiday experience.

*The Holiday at Home Team*



## The man who created '*Father Brown*'

Gilbert Keith Chesterton was born in Kensington, West London on 29<sup>th</sup> May in that memorable year for Elbow Lane - 1874! A novelist, short story writer, philosopher and critic, he was best known for his '*Father Brown*' stories, popular now through their adaptation for television.

He thought of himself as a journalist with good reason, composing 30 years of weekly columns for the *Illustrated London News* and more elsewhere, but he was a prolific writer in many areas, writing 100 books and contributing to 200 others, as well as composing short stories, essays and poems and creating '*Father Brown*'.



He was a tall man weighing over 20 stone, and he was notoriously absent-minded – he once contacted his wife, Frances, to say: "*Am at Market Harborough. Where ought I to be?*" Unsurprisingly, he did a great deal of writing while waiting at stations!

He was a deep thinker, usually getting the better of the many prominent men he argued against, but as a genial and witty opponent, almost invariably retaining their goodwill.

An 'orthodox Christian' who espoused Roman Catholicism because he felt it was the best resistance to fads of the age, he was against both socialism and capitalism, materialism, determinism and 'spineless agnosticism'. He fought for freedom and justice.

Chesterton never went to college but did attend art school. Extremely quotable and read now by too few people, he composed some near-perfect lines, concluding for example that "*the Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and left untried*".

*(from the Parish Pump)*

**With Trinity Sunday (26<sup>th</sup> May) in mind .....**

"Tell me how it is that in this room there are three candles and but one light, and I will explain to you the mode of the divine existence." (John Wesley)

# No One's A Stranger Twice

## 150 Years of Methodism in the Formby Community

by

local author

**Alastair Gillies**

"It was not until I had the privilege of reading this carefully researched and thoughtfully written book, beautifully illustrated, that I came to realise the breadth and depth of the history of Formby Methodist Church within the Formby community. Enjoy! You are in for a treat."

(Rev Dr Sheryl Anderson, Chair of Liverpool Methodist District)



**Now available**

from

Derbyshires, Chapel Street  
and Formby Methodist Church,  
Elbow Lane (Sundays)

**£10**

Also available by post - please write to Formby Methodist Church, Elbow Lane, Formby L37 4AF enclosing a cheque for **£12.50** (inc. £2.50 p&p) payable to Formby Methodist Church or email your details to [formbymethodist@yahoo.com](mailto:formbymethodist@yahoo.com) and make a BACS payment for **£12.50** to sort code: 16-20-12 acc.no: 115004.

With kind support from

Formby Parish Council, Formby Civic Society and Derbyshires

## Some Similarities between Faith and Sport

A former Liverpool Manager Bill Shankly once famously said, *"Some people believe football is a matter of life and death, I am very disappointed with that attitude. I can assure you it is much, much more important than that!"*

This month sees the start of Euro 24, a football tournament, which will be watched by millions across Europe and the world. Yet it also illustrates some key points about the Christian life. As Paul writes: *'But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus.'* (Philippians 3:13b,14).

**A prize to be won:** The dream of every player in the competition is to hold up the Cup themselves. For us the prize is the eternal life, God's gift of relationship with Him for now and eternity through Jesus. But there's an important difference between football and the Christian faith. To win the Euros you have to be good enough, while Christ's love for us is undeserved and is not dependent on how well we've done.

**Training to be undertaken:** If a team is going to win Euro 24, they need to have trained hard beforehand. Our training, as Christians, starts the moment we accept the gift of God's life. On a daily basis, we must train ourselves to say no to the wrong things in our lives.

As we build up our 'godly muscles', we are better able to choose to do what is right in God's eyes. To enable us to do all this we need to engage in the spiritual disciplines of prayer, studying the Bible and being part of a church and small group. How is your training going?

*(from the Parish Pump)*

### ..... and Some Differences of Opinion within the Christian Church

After the local mission outreach had concluded, the three ministers were discussing the results with one another. The Methodist minister said, "The mission worked out great for us! We gained four new families."

The Baptist preacher said, "We did better than that! We gained six new families."

The Anglican vicar said, "We did even better! We got rid of our 10 biggest troublemakers!"

## Do you struggle with doubt?

Do you ever look at other Christians and wonder: *“Do they REALLY believe this Christian stuff? That Jesus really was the Son of God who rose again, and is alive today?”*

Doubt is an honest place to be, and it is not the opposite of Christian faith. To believe is to be in one mind. To disbelieve is to be in one mind also. To doubt is to waver between the two minds, to be in a state of ‘double-ness’, or ‘two-ness’. To doubt something is to be willing to believe it IF you can find evidence to back it up.

If you are in this state of ‘double-ness’ just now, you may find the story of the disciple Thomas (John 20:24-29) to be helpful. Unlike the other disciples, he was not present on that first Easter night when Jesus appeared to the other disciples. Instead, Thomas was told that someone whom he had seen crucified and dead was alive again three days later, and in perfect health.

Thomas had been devoted to Jesus, but the fact that dead people don’t rise again was just too much for him. So, despite the joy of the other disciples, he could get only as far as: *“unless I see the nail marks... I will not believe it.”*

It was a week later that Jesus appeared again to His disciples and confronted Thomas. He said simply: *“Put your finger here; see my hands... Stop doubting and believe.”*

Jesus then looked forward to all the millions of people in the future who would never meet Him in person, and so would have understandable grounds to doubt. “Because you have seen Me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

Thomas needed physical recognition before he could say *“My Lord and My God.”* Today, if you want to believe, but honestly struggle with doubt, consider using this simple prayer:



*“Lord Jesus, I have never seen You in person. So, I sometimes doubt that you exist. The Bible tells us that it is only the Holy Spirit who can open our ‘spiritual eyes’, and so I ask You to do that for me. Please give me not physical recognition, but faith recognition. I will do my bit, and will read about you each day in the Bible. Through Your Word, please open my spiritual eyes so that I can see You clearly as Jesus, the risen Son of God. Amen.”*

(from the Parish Pump)

## **Ruth’s Story**

The book of Ruth is a story of God’s grace operating in difficult circumstances, during the period of the Judges. It unfolds as a four-act drama, telling the story of how Naomi, her husband and two sons left Judah for Moab, where her sons married. When Naomi’s husband and sons died, she returns to Bethlehem in Judah.

In the first act, Naomi tells her Moabite daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, to stay in Moab. However, Ruth refuses to leave Naomi and accompanies her to Bethlehem (chap1). In the next act Ruth meets Boaz, a relative of Naomi, while gathering barley in his fields (chap2).

The third act takes place at the threshing floor with Boaz asleep and Ruth at his feet. She expresses her wish to marry him, as her kinsman-redeemer. But Boaz tells her of another prior claim (chap3). Finally, the other relative renounces his claim, and Boaz marries Ruth (chap4).

In Ruth’s story we see God’s unseen hand directing the lives of the characters to accomplish his purpose e.g. ‘Naomi returned from Moab accompanied by Ruth, arriving in Bethlehem as the barley harvest was beginning’ (1:22). He transforms Naomi’s sorrow into joy, rewarding Ruth with a place of honour in Israel’s history. In Boaz, we see a foreshadowing of the work of Jesus Christ, as he pays the price to secure Ruth’s future.

*‘In its artful telling of this ‘outsider’ widow, uprooted and obscure, who turns out to be the great-grandmother of David and the ancestor of Jesus, the book of Ruth makes it possible for each of us to understand ourselves, however ordinary, as irreplaceable in the full telling of God’s story’.* (Eugene Peterson).

(from the Parish Pump)

**Now try the quiz on Ruth on p34!!**



# **Formby Methodist Church**

## **150th Anniversary**

### **Commemorative Events still to come**

Thursday 6th - Sunday 9th June

#### **Flower Festival**

Tuesday 25th June, 7.30

#### **Sefton Ladies Choir**

Sunday 14th July, 10.30

#### **Church Anniversary Service**

Mrs Carolyn Godfrey

(Vice President of the Methodist Conference)

Sunday 6th October, 10.30

#### **150th Anniversary of first service at Elbow Lane**

Rev David Somerville

(Bury, ex Crosby Circuit)

Friday 11th October, 7.30

#### **Aughton Male Voice Choir**

(with Guest Soloist)

**ALL ARE WELCOME!**

*Rev Peter Crumpler is a Church of England priest in St Albans, Herts, and a former communications director for the C of E.*

## **The Wonderful World of Ladybird Books .....**

I am really excited about a new exhibition at my local museum. It promises to prompt joyful memories of childhood for many older people – and maybe remind them of when they first learnt about Jesus.

*‘The Wonderful World of the Ladybird Artists’* aims to “uncover the story of the talented artists who illustrated Ladybird books for more than 30 years.” It’s a fascinating exhibition that has already been staged in cities from Canterbury to Northumberland.

The organisers say: *“This colourful, family-friendly exhibition includes rare books, original artwork and artefacts, and reveals how illustrators played such an enormous role in Ladybird’s extraordinary success.”*



The company had started over 100 years ago, in 1915, in the town of Loughborough, Leicestershire. William Hepworth recognised that publishing a range of children’s titles could be profitable during the war years and decided, when the presses were idle, to publish inexpensive books. At the start of World War II, paper rationing forced the company to develop the optimum and most economical design for their books, and so created the iconic format that readers are familiar with today: 56

pages in full colour, produced efficiently and cheaply. Remarkably, the price of Ladybirds stayed the same, at 2s.6d from 1940 until the 1970s.

Early Ladybird books included classic fairy tales and light-hearted stories for children. But they also played a vital role in thousands of Sunday Schools and churches in the UK and many other English-speaking countries from the 1940s until well into the 1970s. For many children and youngsters, they were their first introduction to the Bible, with numerous parents and grandparents reading them as bedtime stories. ‘Easy Reading’ versions helped many children read about Jesus for themselves.

I have been collecting some of the Bible-based copies from local charity shops, with titles such as *‘Stories about Jesus the Helper,’ ‘Children of the Bible’* and *‘Two Stories Jesus Told’*, featuring the classic parables, the Good Samaritan and The Prodigal Son. I have been struck by the faithful retelling of the Bible stories, and the quality of the illustrations.

Ladybird books were, naturally, a product of their times with, for example, the skin tones of Jesus and the apostles often lighter than what reality might have been. The books were produced for a time when Bible stories were more widely known, and families were routinely depicted as mum, dad, a son and a daughter.

Regrettably, in recent years, more bizarre incarnations of Ladybird Books – such as *‘The Ladybird Book of the Zombie Apocalypse’* – have introduced new audiences to the Ladybird style, with an ironic, comic twist. Personally, I much prefer the originals!

*(from the Parish Pump)*

## **Rock Around the Clock!**

70 years ago, on 20<sup>th</sup> May 1954, Bill Haley & His Comets released the song *‘Rock Around the Clock’*. It brought rock and roll into the mainstream and is regarded as one of the most important records in music history.

The American rock and roll band had been founded in 1952 and continued to perform under slight name changes and with different personnel until Haley’s death in 1981. Haley had originally played country music but adapted quickly to rock and roll, and led the trend until the advent of such stars as Elvis Presley, Buddy Holly and Little Richard. His popularity in Europe lasted for many years.

*‘Rock Around the Clock’* became a huge hit almost by accident. It was recorded at the last moment as the B-side of a forgettable song called *‘Thirteen Women (and Only One Man in Town)’*, selected by the band’s record label, Decca. The sound level on *‘Rock Around the Clock’* was wrong, making Haley almost inaudible; so they recorded it again without backing, and an inspired engineer spliced the two takes together using old technology!

The record sales were “underwhelming” until Peter Ford, Glenn Ford’s ten-year-old son, happened to play the B-side, loved it, and his father was persuaded to suggest it – together with memorable guitar solo – for the opening credits song of the classic film *‘Blackboard Jungle’*, in which he starred. After that, it sold a million copies in a month!!

*(from the Parish Pump)*



## The Story Behind the Hymn

### ***'Now Thank We All Our God'***

At this time of celebration and giving thanks to God I thought I would choose a hymn looking back over the years and thanking God. *'Lord for the Years'* immediately sprang to mind - except I've already featured it, albeit five years ago! So I then turned to *'Now Thank We All Our God'* - and having researched the history of the hymn, I think, as we will soon be celebrating 150 years of God's goodness to us here at Elbow Lane, it - and especially this first verse - is a very appropriate choice.

*"Now Thank we all our God, with hearts and hands and voices,  
Who wondrous things hath done, in whom His world rejoices;  
Who from our mother's arms, hath blessed us on our way  
With countless gifts of love, and still is ours today."*

This hymn was written by **Martin Rinkart**, a German, born in Ellenburg, Saxony in 1586. At school he was a keen chorister and studied Latin, before progressing to the University of Leipzig, from where he graduated in Theology. He was also a keen chorister.

By the time of the 30 Years War between Sweden and Germany, he was a Lutheran minister back in Ellenburg. During the War, his town was besieged by the Swedish army, during which famine and plague broke out; over 800 homes were destroyed and many died - indeed, after a time Rinkart was the only pastor left. He records that on one day he conducted 50 funerals, and 4,000 in one year, including that of his wife. Eventually, in an effort to ease the situation, he bravely left the confines of the town walls to plead for mercy from the Swedish commander - so impressed was he with Rinkart's faith and courage that he agreed to lift the siege.





Rinkart wrote '*Nun Danket Alle Gotten*' to be sung at a service of celebration for the end of the War.

His hymn remained unknown in Britain for well over 200 years - until **Catherine Winkworth** (1829-1878) found it. A Londoner, who then moved to Manchester, before finally settling near Bristol, she had acquired an unrivalled reputation for making faithful and accurate translations of German hymns into English.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Johann Cruger** (1598-1662) was the contemporary composer of the melody for '*Nun Danket Alle Gott*'; it was the finest of the many tunes which he wrote and indeed became so well known that it has even been claimed that it was the best known tune in the world! At midnight on New Year's Eve, as the clock strikes twelve, it is still customary for many German Christian households to sing Rinkart's hymn to Crüger's tune.

In the 19th century, Cruger's harmony was slightly adapted from a work by the famous German composer Felix Mendelssohn.

**Geoffrey Beaumont** (1903-1970) was an Anglican priest and monk of the Community of the Resurrection. With Patrick Appleford (we know him as the writer of the well known communion hymn '*Lord Jesus Christ*') he founded the '20th Century Church Light Music Group' which updated the tunes of many traditional hymns. Probably his two best known hymn tunes are '*Hatherop Castle*' for '*O Jesus I have promised*' and - '*Gracias*' for '*Now Thank We All Our God*'.

Both tunes are eminently singable - '*Nun Danket*' is, of course, more fitting for funerals and other solemn occasions, while '*Hatherop Castle*' makes '*Now Thank We All Our God*' entirely appropriate for even the most lively and contemporary services.

*Alastair*

## Eco News

Last Autumn the Eco group planted **bulbs** around the trees at the front of church to provide early flowers for bees and other pollinators. Thanks to Irene W, Jenny H and Jane G who have kept the planters looking good through the changing seasons. We have just installed a water butt nearby to aid watering and as rainwater is free it will reduce the church's water bill.

**Formby & Freshfield Beach Litter Angels** have started their regular Tuesday evening litter picks at Victoria Road beach car park. You can contact them at [beachlitterangels@gmail.com](mailto:beachlitterangels@gmail.com), on Facebook or speak to Jane or me.

5<sup>th</sup> June is **World Environment Day** – led by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). The focus is on restoring ecosystems in water sources and on land polluted, deforested or degraded by unsustainable farming. Their website is very informative and interesting. [www.unep.org/events/un-day/world-environment-day-2024](http://www.unep.org/events/un-day/world-environment-day-2024). Below are a few facts and tips from it:-

*3.2 billion people, or 40% of the world's population, are impacted by land degradation, which disproportionately affects those who are least equipped to cope –Indigenous Peoples, rural communities, smallholder farmers and the extremely poor, especially women and youth. 55 million people are directly affected by droughts annually, making it the most serious hazard to livestock and crops in nearly every part of the world. If land degradation remains unchecked it could reduce global food productivity by 12%, causing food prices to soar by up to 30% by 2040.*

*Globally, at least 2 billion people depend on the agriculture sector for their livelihoods, particularly poor and rural populations. But our current food systems are unsustainable and a prime driver of land degradation. You can help by buying sustainably and locally produced food products when affordable and ask shops for clearer labelling. Some foods can actually help repair soil. Try including more pulses like beans, lentils and peas in your diet*

*Almost 75% of the world's fruit and seed crops depend on pollinators including 87 of 115 leading food crops worldwide. And while bees are the most prolific pollinators, they are helped by others, such as bats, butterflies, beetles and birds. However, all of them, especially bees, are in serious decline, due to intensive agricultural practices, pesticide use, invasive species, diseases and climate change. You can help attract pollinators by planting diverse native flowers or leaving a 'wild patch' in your garden.*

8-16<sup>th</sup> June is Churches **Count on Nature** week when we are encouraged to notice the variety of wildlife in our gardens and record what we see on our church grounds. It's a time to enjoy and celebrate God's creation and the huge variety of plants and animals around us. This is a good time to praise God for his creation and be mindful on how to help care for it - and of course it coincides with our Flower Festival! (Jenny Wallbanks)



## The RSPCA celebrates 200 years!

It was 200 years ago this month, on 16<sup>th</sup> June 1824, that a London vicar, Arthur Broome, and some 22 of his friends, including the MP William Wilberforce, met at Old Slaughters Coffee House in London. They were there because they were deeply concerned about the pitiful plight of many animals in Victorian England.

That day in June, Arthur Broome and his friends decided to found the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA). It was the first national animal protection society in the world. Wilberforce, who was also known for campaigning to end slavery in the British colonies, now turned his attention also to the welfare of animals.



At the time, compassion for animals was regarded as strange. But the SPCA began to change all that, by working tirelessly to promote kindness, and to prevent cruelty to animals.

By 1840 the Society's work was held in such high regard that Queen Victoria gave her permission for the SPCA to be called the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.



By then there were five full-time inspectors, who were paid a guinea a week. Nowadays, the Society has many staff in England and Wales, including 323 inspectors and many volunteers. It is a charity and receives no government funding. It looks after ALL animals, including farm animals, wildlife, pets, and research animals.

And as an interesting footnote to history: the SPCA was launched five years *before* even the police force!

*(from the Parish Pump)*



## A Quiz on the Book of Ruth!

1. Why did Elimelech go to live in Moab with his family?  
(a) *disagreement with his town leaders* (b) *famine in his home town*  
(c) *distant relatives invited him*
2. What happened to Elimelech in Moab?  
(a) *he died* (b) *he left his wife* (c) *he was killed by the King of Moab*
3. What relationship was Ruth to Naomi?  
(a) *daughter* (b) *granddaughter* (c) *daughter-in-law*
4. Who said "your God shall be my God"?  
(a) *Naomi* (b) *Ruth* (c) *Oprah*
5. What did Naomi tell the people in Bethlehem to call her?  
(a) *Sara* (b) *Rachel* (c) *Mara*
6. Who was Boaz?  
(a) *kinsman of Elimelech* (b) *kinsman of Naomi* (c) *Town Mayor*
7. Why did Boaz allow Ruth to glean in his field?  
(a) *he was short of workers* (b) *she was beautiful* (c) *she had looked after Naomi*
8. What was Boaz doing at the threshing floor?  
(a) *threshing grain* (b) *winnowing barley* (c) *treading grapes*
9. What did Ruth do while Boaz was sleeping?  
(a) *uncovered his feet and lay down* (b) *gently woke him up*  
(c) *covered his head and sat next to him*
10. How did the townspeople regard Ruth?  
(a) *as a beautiful woman* (b) *as a virtuous woman* (c) *as a caring woman*
11. Why does the kinsman not want to marry Ruth?  
(a) *didn't like her* (b) *already married* (c) *didn't want to spoil inheritance*
12. What was removed to signify agreement between Boaz and the kinsman?  
(a) *robe* (b) *sandal* (c) *ring*
13. What was the name of Ruth's son?  
(a) *Obed* (b) *Boaz* (c) *Jesse*
14. What was the name of Ruth's great-grandson?  
(a) *Jesse* (b) *David* (c) *Solomon*

*(Clues on p26, Answers on p39)*

*"A Committee is a body that keeps minutes and wastes hours!"*

## Using Rest to Pray

Most of us think of prayer as a very demanding activity, but did you know it can be extremely restful?

One of the great verses in the Bible says this: *'Be still and know that I am God'* (Psalm 46:10). It suggests we experience God most fully when we are still. When we cease rushing around, pausing for a moment of thought and recollection, we are becoming prayerful, and God is very near. Even a break for a morning coffee can be a moment of prayer, if we slow ourselves down and allow our thoughts to turn towards God.

An essential part of resting is to breathe slowly. Christian tradition has always connected prayer and breathing. You can learn to pray to the rhythm of your breathing, using chosen prayer words to focus. As you breathe in, you might say 'Abba', and then as you breathe out, add the word 'Father'. Choose words which are meaningful to you, deliberately slowing your breathing so you become relaxed and peaceful.

Perhaps you have a favourite chair where you are able to unwind easily. For a few moments sit and do nothing. Simply become aware of the present moment, reminding yourself you are in the presence of God. As you feel yourself relax, bask in the knowledge of God's love and acceptance of you. Sense His smile of approval upon you. You don't have to do anything, just 'be' for a moment. This too is prayer.

Sometimes we are forced to rest by circumstances... illness, disability, growing older and so on slow us down and we can't rush around like we used to do. Never mind. Don't fight against your circumstances. Enter into the place of rest that God is giving you. He loves you for who you are, not for what you do. Turn your thoughts into prayer and offer them to God. You don't need to advise God as to what He should do; simply hold people before Him, leaving the outcome to Him.

Prayer should be a natural expression of our relationship with God. Sometimes we have words, sometimes silence is enough. We do not need to impress God with our fervour. We can relax and be rested, even as we pray.

*(from the Parish Pump)*

*"Despite inflation, the wages of sin remain the same!"*

## Chaplains keep faith in football

Chaplains are playing a vital role in the Premier League and other leagues across the UK. Currently 11 English Premier League clubs and 55 Football League clubs have chaplains, with some clubs even having more than one. There are also chaplains throughout the National League and in lower league clubs. The growth in women's football has led to more chaplains being appointed to serve women's teams.

Matt Baker is National Director for England, overseeing all of English Sport for Sports Chaplaincy UK. He combines the role with being chaplain at Charlton Athletic, a position he has held since March 2000. He explains:

*"The role of the chaplain is to be pastorally proactive and spiritually reactive. This means being regularly present, listening and supporting people whether they have a faith or not. From a spiritual perspective an example of this was when a player asked me 15 years ago whether I would pray with him before a game. On the first occasion there were a couple of players and we prayed together before every game for the rest of that season. This has continued ever since as there always seem to be Christian players in the squad and so pre-match prayers before a home game have become a part of the regular routine for those wanting it. When we have had players of other faiths, a room has also been made available for prayers for them as well."*

Matt loves his role. He says: *"I'm a people person so I love being around staff and players, getting to know them, listening and helping to support wherever I can. It's a tremendous privilege to be a chaplain at a football club and I never take that lightly."*

Many churches have local football and other sporting clubs on their doorsteps and may want to see if a chaplaincy might be possible. So what would Matt's advice be to Christians wanting to make the connection?

*"Get in touch with us at Sports Chaplaincy UK. Depending on an individual's location and sport we can advise on any vacancies we are aware of, guide them through any openings and offer the relevant sports chaplaincy training and support."*

*(from the Parish Pump)*

'I had some words with my wife, and she had some paragraphs with me'

(Sigmund Freud)

'I took the wife's family out for tea and biscuits. They weren't too happy about having to give blood though'

(Les Dawson)

## Christian leaders killed or disappeared in occupied Ukraine

Into the third year of Russia's occupation of parts of Ukraine, Christian leaders are still being killed, tortured and disappeared. And in Russia, priests who oppose Putin's invasion continue to be imprisoned or silenced.

*"As President Putin begins his fifth term our partners describe growing pressure on the Church," says Paul Robinson, CEO of UK-based Release International, which supports persecuted Christians worldwide. "And yet", he says, "in the face of fear, insecurity and oppression, hunger for the gospel is growing. We hear reports of churches packed to overflowing and many giving their lives to Christ."*



On 13th February, in the streets of Kalanchak in Russian-occupied Kherson, Father Stepan Podolchak, a 59 year old Ukrainian Orthodox priest, was seized and hauled away barefoot with a bag over his head, according to human rights organisation Forum 18. His bruised body was found lifeless in the street two days later. Some reports say he had been shot in the head. But the

official cause of death was given as a heart attack. According to his bishop, Russian military forces had *"tortured Father Stepan to death"*.

It is believed he was taken by operatives of the Russian Interior Ministry's Centre for Countering Extremism. Increasingly, denominations other than President Putin's Russian Orthodox are being regarded as extremists. Along with other priests, Father Podolchak had been pressured, but had refused, to desert the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and join the Moscow Patriarchate. He had prayed for Ukraine, even under occupation, and because of this the Russians took away his life.

He is not the first Christian leader to be dragged away and dispatched by the occupying forces. UN Special Rapporteurs have stated in writing to the Russian authorities their *"serious concern for the alleged enforced disappearances and torture... of clergy in the occupied territories."*

Many Churches have been forcibly closed, including those of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, Baptists and Greek Catholics. In the Ukraine town of Balaklija, the Russian-appointed mayor went into the chapel and declared: *'There will be no God here. There will be no Christians. Only the Moscow Orthodox Church.'* The building was then looted. *(from the Parish Pump)*



## **Speed Cameras - and Moses!**

*"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." (1 Timothy 2:2)*

It is not often you get Moses and the local police popping up in the same sermon! I was thinking about the Bible passage that has the second attempt Moses made at the Ten Commandments. God had given Moses the laws, but he broke them in disgust when he found the people were behaving so badly. God asked him up to the mountain again and gave him a second set. *"Keep taking the tablets!"*

I was recently walking in my village and wondered why the traffic was driving so peacefully and slowly. When I got to the lay-by to catch a bus, I saw why. There was a police van fitted with a speed camera. The cars were driving slowly, well within the 30mph limit. I nearly went up to the officer to thank them, and to ask if they could come every day.

It was a good illustration for my next sermon! We do not want to get caught ourselves! We expect others to obey the law, but often find exceptions when we are late or have an important errand. We repeatedly make mistakes, but have a loving and gracious God. As Christians we should be good drivers - and good pedestrians and road user. We should take an interest in local affairs, find out how parish and town councils deal with them and pray for people in authority - and the police-officer who spent a long morning watching slow traffic!

*(David Pickup, a solicitor, in the Parish Pump)*

## **Our Roads are at 'Breaking Point'**

Have you hit a pothole and damaged your car yet? If not, you soon will! Despite two million potholes being filled over the past year (the highest number since 2015) the Asphalt Industry Alliance (AIA) is still warning that our roads are crumbling to 'breaking point'. It reported that just under half the roads in England and Wales which are maintained by local councils are in good condition, 36% are adequate and 17% are poor. The RAC reckon that *"the scale of the problem now facing councils is truly gargantuan."* £16.3 billion is needed to fix the backlog. Over 107,000 miles of roads are fast reaching the end of their lives. *(from the Parish Pump)*



**Formby Methodist Church**  
**Special Commemorative Event**

**Celebrating 150 Years**

# **REJOICE**

## **Floral Festival**

**Plus**

**History of Elbow Lane  
Exhibition**

**6th – 9th June**

**Thursday to Saturday 10:30am – 4:00pm**  
**Sunday Church Service 10:30 – 11:30am**  
**Church Open 12:00 – 03:00pm**

**Free admission**  
**All are welcome!**

**Refreshments available**  
**Donations accepted**

**Formby Methodist Church**  
**Elbow Lane**