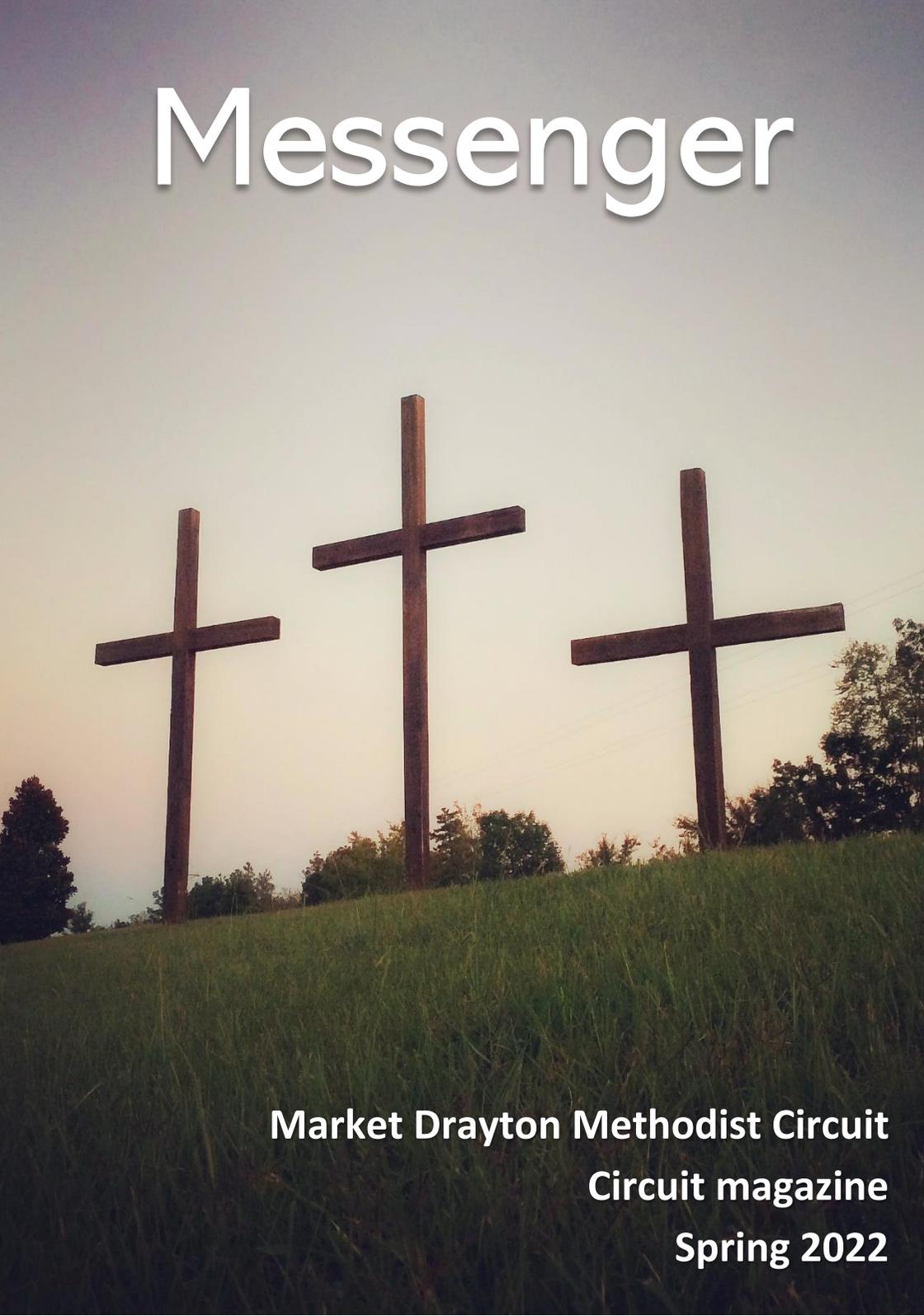


# Messenger

A photograph of three large, simple wooden crosses standing on a grassy hill. The crosses are made of dark wood and are arranged in a slightly curved line from left to right. The background shows a soft, hazy sky at sunset or sunrise, with some trees and utility lines visible in the distance. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

**Market Drayton Methodist Circuit**  
**Circuit magazine**  
**Spring 2022**

# Message from Mark

Dear Friends,

As I write this Messenger article I give praise to God for His faithfulness. Since moving to Market Drayton Carolyn and I have been so glad to be part of this church family. Carolyn has and is settling into her new CAP ministry and doors are opening for her there. It has been a pleasure for us to start to get to know many of you better.

Since the last Messenger message(!) plans are coming together for the ToughTalk mission 18-20 March. I have recently had confirmed that they will be able to visit HMP Stoke Heath. Please pray that this goes ahead. I'm also seeking to get them in to the Tern Hill barracks as well as here in both Ashley and MD.

Since a prayer meeting with my colleague Rev Becky Richards last year and a few notable Methodists(!) we felt that the Lord wanted us to restart the work from Hinstock chapel. As you will see from the plan we are seeking to listen and obey by starting to do outreach into the village wherever the Lord opens the doors. The Circuit Leadership Team felt that Paul and Ness were the ones to officially lead this and subject to the necessary Council and Circuit Meeting approvals this will hopefully go ahead. So watch this space and the notices for further developments. We are spurred on by the fact that the Lord Jesus said,

**“I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”**

(Matthew 16:18 ESV)

Here's a question for you to ponder, 'What are you doing to work alongside Jesus in making this a reality here and now?'

One of the things I'm keen to encourage is for those of you who are currently not official members to become so. We are not seeking to bolster up a denomination, but rather strengthen the body of the church.

When we have more members standing together it gives us greater influence, it enables us to send a message to a declining and diminishing structure that Jesus is alive! Many things can be debated and discussed but growing church fellowships are a testimony to the human authorities and the powers of darkness that Jesus is indeed alive and working through His body the church! So I would ask you to get in touch with me and I can explain what's involved. I would also ask you to consider if you've been baptised by full immersion yet? The New Testament clearly gives the call through the words of the Lord Jesus that we are to make disciples, baptising them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is a symbol of giving up the old ways, in fact, dying to them and rising to the new life which is only truly possible through our Lord Jesus Christ – so exciting! Let me know. God is speaking to us all right now if we're listening. He doesn't want you to just muddle through life, but to truly live it and live it abundantly (John 10:10)

Another way Jesus is building His church is through the small fellowship groups. It has been my privilege to visit some of the groups and to share together with you. These are lovely ways to pray for one another, encourage one another and travel along together. As we all know sometimes the going gets tough and we need help! I've heard countless testimonies of people who have been carried through difficult times by God's help in the love of close Christian friends. The Lord wants us to belong to His wonderful family. It is what the world is craving for, but looking in all the wrong places! But we've discovered this gem of togetherness in Christ!

I pray you have a blessed Lent as we journey towards the cross and the glorious resurrection. We'll give you details of further ways we can encourage one another and reach out to those who need to know the forgiveness, grace, mercy and hope of the Gospel.

Yours in Christ,

Rev Mark

# MAF – Flying for Life

In today's 'connected world', the irony is that never have so many people been so isolated.

If a person has a medical emergency and the nearest hospital is a few days walk or an uncomfortable drive on rough roads, their prognosis is poor.

When natural disasters, conflict or famine strike hard-to-reach places, an aircraft may be the only safe way to reach the people on the ground.

Many remote communities have never heard the Gospel and are living in spiritual darkness.



Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) is a Christian organisation whose mission is to fly light aircraft in developing countries so that people in remote areas receive the help they need. Since their inception following WWII, their planes have been spreading the Good News of Jesus by word and deed, in places where flying is not a luxury but a lifeline.

Now operating 131 light aircraft in 26 developing countries from Bangladesh to Ecuador, Haiti to Papua New Guinea, MAF delivers lifesaving aid, humanitarian personnel and disaster relief to some of the poorest and most inaccessible communities on earth.

Over the last 75 years, MAF has constantly advanced the scope of its operation by modernising its aircraft, equipping its staff and improving its capabilities to become a global leader in humanitarian aviation.



Today MAF is the world's largest humanitarian airline flying to more remote destinations than the top three commercial airlines combined. Every four minutes, an MAF aircraft takes off or lands somewhere in the world.

## MAF's Vision

'At MAF, we believe nothing should stop people receiving the love of God and the essentials of life – no matter how remote they are. Our vision is 'to see isolated people changed by the love of Christ.' We use aviation and technology, because in many places those are the only ways to reach isolated people in need.'

To find out more about MAF, you can visit <https://www.maf-uk.org/> or talk to Diana B at MDMC.

A representative from MAF will be joining us in our morning service at MDMC on 13<sup>th</sup> March at 10.30am and anyone who would like to know more about the wonderful work that MAF-UK does is welcome to join us.



## BRIEF BIBLE BIOGRAPHIES

# THOMAS

Rev. Paul Clapham

**There are, relatively speaking, few named characters in the Gospel record. We have Jesus, his mother and supposed father, his siblings, his disciples and then usually “a certain man” or “a woman from Syro-Phoenicia”, for example. (John’s Gospel gives us more named minor characters than the synoptic Gospels do, this is one reason why I believe that the Gospel was either written by the disciple himself or by someone closely connected to the disciple - there is a feeling that the writer is actually reminiscing).**

Perhaps it is because there are so few named characters that many of them have become caricatures: Peter, of obstinacy and bull-headedness; Andrew, the one who introduced others; Nicodemus, the secret disciple; Judas, the betrayer; Thomas the doubter.

From the Gospels we learn little about Thomas. He is mentioned

only in the list of the twelve in the Synoptic Gospels; but John gives us the added information that he was a twin. Twins at that time were regarded with superstition and suspicion. His twin might have been known to the Gospel writer. If they were identical twins, even the disciples might have been unsure which one was present with them at any one time - the doubt might have been on both sides. If his twin had not survived that might have affected his character.

For whatever reason Thomas did seem to have a pessimistic outlook. He is the one, who when Jesus is speaking in poetic language, asks for a physical basis. Again, he is the one for whom the marks of crucifixion are important. Perhaps he mirrors the need for obvious physical signs in many of us. I can imagine him checking the physical basis of healing miracles, wanting to know what had actually happened. I

get the impression that he would quickly become impatient with the rambling, repetitive discourses as related in John's gospel.

He is famous for being not present when Jesus first revealed himself to his disciples after the resurrection. You can imagine them regretting this. If anyone could bring reason to bear on the impossible events of the resurrection, it would be Thomas. He might have been the one who doubted but by staying with the group of disciples, he was still showing more faith. He stayed with them even at the possible cost of his

own life.

It seems though he had more clearly than the others reasoned through what the resurrection meant. It is Thomas, who on being presented with the evidence, first makes the amazing intuitive decision, that in the circumstances, Jesus cannot be just a man, a good man, a prophet or even the Messiah; he must be God.

Subsequently of course Thomas was the one of the twelve who travelled furthest. He established the Christian church on the west coast of India which still bears his name.

So Thomas, should he be identified as the doubter, or the faithful one who when there was no hope, still continued to hope?

**Read:**

John 14 : 5;  
John 20 : 24 – 31;

# The Road to Nowhere

Carolyn Lawrence



On a recent holiday, one of our walks took us through what looked like the beginnings of a new housing estate where the roads had been laid down but no houses had yet been built. Off the main road we saw several beginnings of roads which just led to nowhere!

This made me think about how often our lives can be a bit like a road to nowhere – we can be busy with all kinds of activities but they can seem fruitless and leave us feeling frustrated.

As visitors arrive by boat into the Brayford Pool in Lincoln, they are greeted by a sign on the bridge that says, ‘Where have you been?’ and as they leave another sign asks, ‘Where are you going?’ Both very good questions and ones that are worth asking ourselves as individuals and churches.

Where have we been?

From the very beginning, mission has been in the DNA of the church. The early church faced great opposition from the culture around them and their lives were constantly in danger, and yet they continued to boldly preach the gospel and live it out by the power of the Holy Spirit and as a result the church grew phenomenally. One of my favourite passages of Scripture is those few verses in Acts 2 vs 42-47, where we read about the day to day lives of the early church. I see those verses as an example of the simplicity of our Christian walk. They shared together, worshipped, studied God’s word, prayed, performed signs and wonders by the power of the Holy Spirit and the result? ‘The Lord added to their number DAILY those who were being saved.’ Awesome!

When we look back at the history of the Methodist Church and read stories of John Wesley and the early Methodists, we can’t fail to be inspired by the way that God was on the move, growing the church and using her to transform society. I have a real heart for the nations so I also find it inspirational to read about the way the Methodist Church reached out with the gospel to the nations and took the great commission seriously – to go into all the world to make

disciples. The courage shown by some of those early missionaries, many of whom never returned to these shores, makes for challenging and inspirational reading.

We are truly building on the shoulders of giants and as we stand on the foundation built by our forebears we have a responsibility to carry their legacy into the future. I believe that God hasn't finished with the Methodist Church yet and still has much work for us to do but also believe that we need to refocus on what is important and not allow ourselves to be side-lined or distracted by things that are not of eternal significance – things that lead us down dead end streets.

People in our society are crying out for relationship, a sense of belonging. They are looking for something that will make a difference in their lives and give them meaning and purpose. As Christians we carry this wonderful good news that there is a place where they can belong and be loved, where they can find meaning and purpose and that is to be found in knowing Jesus.

So we know where we have come from – but where are we going?

God has a good plan and wants each of us as individuals and churches to be a part of that plan. I believe we need a fresh vision of what God wants to do in and through us. Sometimes we can overcomplicate things but I think that just as the early church lived in simple trust and in the power of the Holy Spirit, we need a fresh anointing of God in our day.

Often we have become so clever planning our strategies and forming committees to discuss minutiae of mission but what it boils down to is that we can't do anything in our own strength and have to realise our total dependence on God. To be prepared to lay aside our agendas and carefully laid out plans; maybe even stop doing some of the things we are currently involved with that are not bearing fruit, and see where God is moving so we can join in! Sometimes that will get messy and take us out of our comfort zones but it will be anything but boring!

If we want to see renewal in our lives and churches then it's not rocket science. We need to get back to the simple basics – get on our knees before God in prayer and commit to total dependence on Jesus, without whose help we can do nothing. We need to commit to standing on God's word and ask him for a fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit. We need to lay aside the things that keep us busy or entertained but ultimately are a waste of time or fruitless in the eternal scheme of things.

And we need to recognize that the church belongs to Jesus – he has said, 'I will build my church' and it is so exciting to see what he can do with an individual or fellowship when they are sold out for him and his glory. Let's give Jesus his church back! The best truly is yet to come!

# Tough Talk



Tough Talk is a registered charity dedicated to sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ in an informal way that appeals to people who would not normally go to a church meeting. It is made up of a group of men with backgrounds of ex-bouncers and ex-East End hard men who have turned their backs on their past. Many of the team are very keen powerlifters. All the team feel that having let God into their lives, they now have an urgent need to share their experiences with the hope of helping others. They have found that the message of hope in Jesus Christ reaches people from all backgrounds and age groups.

[www.tough-talk.com](http://www.tough-talk.com)

Tough-Talk will be visiting Market Drayton 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> March and we look forward to them joining us for our morning service at MDMC on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> March at 10.30am. All are welcome. Speak to Rev. Mark for more information on the other events and activities they will be participating in while they are with us.



**MARKET DRAYTON**  
**METHODIST CHURCH**

# **MDMC Bible School** **March 2022**

**with Peter Davies**

## **ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS** **in JOHN'S GOSPEL.**

**Sessions on Tuesdays**

**1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd & 29th March 2022**  
**at 1.00 - 2.30pm & 7.30 - 9.00pm.**

*MDMC Bible School is aimed at all levels of Bible knowledge and will be suitable for **anyone** who would like to know more about the teaching and impact of the Bible and how to apply it today.*

*We have enjoyed Peter's ministry with us at MDMC Bible School since 2010. He is an inspirational Bible teacher who combines academic excellence with a pastoral heart.*

*Choose to attend the afternoon or evening session to suit you.*

*The life groups at MDMC are encouraged to join the Bible School alongside their own programme and this material is ideal for Local Preachers' continued development.*

*We ask for a contribution to cover costs.*

**For more details please contact Paul Savill on**  
**07811 517324 or email [pwsavill@gmail.com](mailto:pwsavill@gmail.com)**

**Market Drayton Methodist Church. Shrewsbury Road, Market Drayton, Shropshire, TF9 3DL**



**MDMC Market Drayton Methodist Church**



**[www.mdmc.org.uk](http://www.mdmc.org.uk)**

Photo: ian-rodsmith-unsplash

# Dates for your diary

## **CIRCUIT EVENTS & SERVICES**

**Easter Offering Circuit Service – Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> May**

## **ASHLEY METHODIST CHURCH**

**Bible Study – Thursday's at 10am**

## **MARKET DRAYTON METHODIST CHURCH**

**Wednesday Communion – 11am – 30<sup>th</sup> March, 27<sup>th</sup> April, 25<sup>th</sup> May**

**Worship at 6 – 6pm – 13<sup>th</sup> March, 10<sup>th</sup> April, 22<sup>nd</sup> May**

**Songs of Praise – 3.30pm – 6<sup>th</sup> March, 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 1<sup>st</sup> May**

**Easter Breakfast – following the 8am service, Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> April**

**Compassion Sunday – Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> May**

## **COMMUNITY EVENTS**

**10K – 8<sup>th</sup> May**



[ASHLEYMETHODIST.CO.UK](http://ASHLEYMETHODIST.CO.UK)



[HINSTOCK](http://HINSTOCK)



[MDMC.ORG.UK](http://MDMC.ORG.UK)