

The Messenger

CIRCUIT MAGAZINE

ASHLEY Methodist Church

MARKET DRAYTON METHODIST CHURCH

SEPTEMBER 2026

Message from Rev Rob

Dear friends,

I am writing this letter as we look forward to some very significant events within the life of our churches and Circuit. After our first year of ministry here, I am mindful that there is much to give thanks for and this magazine is one opportunity to acknowledge this. From our welcome, to a Christmas campaign, redecorating at Market Drayton, a great Alpha launch with JB Gill and 70 registrations for the course, to 13 baptisms at Easter, 23 new members at Pentecost, uplifting funeral celebrations, weddings, and a wonderful Bear Grylls book club, we do have so much to thank God for.

But hopefully, this magazine will give you a flavour of how much more there is to look forward to in the weeks and months to come 😊 There will be new Life Groups, a Christian meditation group, a new book club, plus a '40 Days of Love' campaign of prayer, followed by the opportunity to invite friends, contacts and family to Harvest and Church Anniversary services, with a series of Autumn concerts and our Advent worship also soon available too.

Our Harvest Services will focus on 'A Harvest of Talents' with a special weekend planned at Market Drayton and our Ashley young people helping to lead worship at AMC. It is my hope that if anyone has hidden talents 'hiding their light under a bushel', that they will have an opportunity to share their talents with us this Harvest at 'The Talent Show' or in our worship.

In the parable of talents, one person is given five talents, another two and to the third just one talent. The truth, which is shared, is that you should not hide your talents, making the most of all the God-given talents we have received. However, for those with five talents, the expectation is that five more will be produced and the challenge for us as churches and as a Circuit (in my view) is that if we have been given five talents, which means we need to be fruitful and produce a substantial harvest.

The success of our events such as the BFG (Big Family Gathering) and

more recently 'Fairsy Fest' at 'The Zone' on the Fairfields Estate, demonstrate the talents and capacity we have as a Circuit to deliver very positive experiences for our local community, whilst sharing the love of Christ in a sensitive and relevant way. However, we do need to build on that capacity, which is why the Church Anniversary Appeals are so important, as we all prayerfully consider our personal and financial response to the church and Circuit.

On October 13th a small team led by Rev Roger Baker will be visiting partner churches in Romania (read more on pg. ___), when I will have the privilege of preaching at their Anniversary Services. Please do pray for us.

Our Annual Thanksgiving Service for those who have died in recent times will be at Ashley this year on Sunday 1st November at 3.30pm. This is a wonderful opportunity to remember our friends and family with others from the local community. This will be alongside the Civic Remembrance Service and our own Remembrance Day worship the following week.

We are looking forward to the launch of a new Children's Choir at Market Drayton, with a new Alternative Worship Experience (AWE) also launching soon with Matt and Cathy Baker helping to lead. The partnership with Tern Hill Hall is also continuing to develop with a 'Classic Cars and Carols' event on Thursday 3rd December (tbc) which will hopefully be filmed by a Methodist Church film crew 😊 Plus there does seem to be quite a demand for another BFG event next Summer too 😊

I trust that you are encouraged as you read this magazine, but that you are also inspired to offer your gifts and talents in the Lord's service. May you know His blessing and favour, as we see the harvest of God's Spirit outworking in all our lives and the Circuit as a whole.

Your friend and minister,



Revd Rob Cotton

CONTACT REV ROB

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Normal working days: Sunday - Wednesday

fairsy fest





Kev Lee

In recent years we as a church have worked with an organisation called “The Extreme Tour” who partner Christian bands, musicians and artists from The United States, with others from this country, and arrange tours of Britain and Europe. We have benefitted hugely from being part of previous tours, and have thoroughly enjoyed putting on music concerts on the Fairfields Estate each summer. The people from Fairfields have also valued these concerts taking place on their patch, to the point that they named the event “FairsyFest!”

Following a change in leadership of the Extreme Tour, plus our desire to throw ourselves into the BFG event, it felt right not to be a part of the tour this year. We still very much wanted to maintain and develop the amazing relationships with the residents of the Fairfields estate though, so we committed to putting on “FairsyFest 26” ourselves.

Thanks to funding from The Fisher Fund and Chester and Stoke District Youth, plus donations from BCRS Business Loans and our own church Social Hour, we were able to hire PA and staging (many thanks to Robin Perry for arranging this) and purchase a brilliant gazebo for wet-weather protection (thankfully not needed due to great weather on the afternoon, and can now be used for other church outreach events such as the 10K) and many thanks to Mark Sav for researching and buying this.

The afternoon was filled with three musical acts: our BFG band started proceedings and our church youth

band, “The Chronicles” headlined the event. Between the two, ErinParton, a brilliant, local, 14 year old, played a fantastic set. Erin has come through our youth clubs, and currently volunteers, helping to run our Explosion youth group. Jodie also bravely gave testimony and there was a very noticeable hush around the field as she shared how much God means to her.

This was an amazing afternoon. It has helped develop relationships with the 4All Foundation who



manage The Zone building, the Town Clerk who supported us through the organisational aspects, the mayor who attended the event, as well as the people from the area, as Godly conversations took place.

I know that we will officially hold our “Harvest of Talents” at the beginning of October, but for me, this whole event summed us up as a church as a celebration of gifts and talents. From Gail and June helping with the administration of risk assessments and public liability insurance, to Al’s creativity designing the poster artwork, Andrew and Robin putting up the staging, PA system, gazebo and event shelter, to the musicians who had been practicing for weeks to be ready, Robin mixing the sound all afternoon, Rev. Rob publically blessing the event, those who helped distribute the refreshments that we bought to give away, and those who generously gave up their time to support the event and hold it in prayer. It shone as an example of one body with many parts.

WE ARE AN AMAZING TEAM!



A season of thankfulness

Hi Everyone,

Now we are entering autumn, cooler weather and a few more wet days, it is hard to remember the scorching temperatures of the summer months. When it's hot we want rain when it's rainy we want sunshine. For Church, of course, the Methodist New Year begins in September, and after having a bit of a break over August, everything kicks off again and we gain a new momentum. It is exciting to see and imagine what God will have in store for us at MDMC and Ashley in the coming months.

One thing we have coming up is our 'Harvest of Talents Weekend' at MDMC on 3rd and 4th October. It should be a wonderful weekend, where we will give thanks to God not only for His provision for us and creativity, but also thank Him for the gifts and talents He jbestows upon us. The Church and foyer will be full of flower displays, food, and farming and garden equipment displays. The lounge will display the many talents our young people and youth have. The Hall will have displays of creativity from the adults. Refreshments will be served, and the talent of baking will be there to enjoy.

In the evening at 7pm we will have a talent show, where we will showcase various talents of music, drama, dance, poetry etc. This weekend is something that everyone can get involved in in some way, so please sign up to help. But, it is also for you to bring along your friends and family to enjoy what is on offer throughout both days and the evening.

I wonder if October could be a month of thankfulness. Harvest helps us to thank God for His continued love and provision for us and it allows us to give to others with a thankful heart. I wonder if we could also think of people in our lives, past and present, who we may like to thank for the impact they have had on our lives or for what they mean to us. Just to say thank you to someone or write a letter or make a phone call can mean so much.

Carol

'At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.'

Albert Schweitzer

MARKET DRAYTON METHODIST CHURCH PRESENTS A

HARVEST OF TALENTS

WEEKEND

3RD–4TH OCTOBER

SAT 3RD 10AM–3PM & SUN 4TH 1PM–4PM

OPEN CHURCH

Flower Displays
Art & Craft Displays
Refreshments available

SAT 3RD 7PM

TALENT SHOW

All welcome

SUN 4TH 10.30AM

HARVEST WORSHIP

All welcome

MARKET DRAYTON METHODIST CHURCH

WWW.MDMC.ORG.UK



THE BFG
BIG FAMILY GATHERING

It's June 14th 2026, a typical spring day with an uncertain weather forecast...

Yet in the grounds of Tern Hill Hall Hotel, something rather wonderful is taking shape...

Not simply open-air worship. Not just a picnic in the park.

Not merely an opportunity to meet with and spend time with friends.

Not only a chance to engage with our communities.

No. This was something more. All of the above and something greater.

This was BFG – the **B**ig **F**amily **G**athering!

A place where our families, our church families, our community became one.

And the sun shone!

With lively worship, bouncy castles, a maypole, messy church, craft stalls, ice cream and live entertainment...

...it was a **B**eautiful, **F**un-filled, **G**od-space!

The grounds of the hotel rang with music, laughter and thankfulness.

Some interesting characters joined the party...Wesley the Dog, The Market Drayton Gingerbread man, The BFG himself and mayor Cllr Tim Manton, who was blown away by the whole event.

Of course none of this 'just happened'

A hard working team pulled together a fantastic event in a really short time. And it is to this team (you know who you are), to the hotel and

staff, to the worship band and musicians that we owe a huge debt of thanks.

Everyone pulled together - setting up the site, providing staging, and pa, managing carparking, arranging activities, making everyone welcome, wearing (and sometimes making) silly outfits... and clearing it all up again at the end of the day.

People who attended, and there were over 600, were quick to voice their enjoyment and appreciation, and before the afternoon had ended there were pleas that we do it all again next year!

It's amazing what can happen when people offer even a little bit of time share a tempting glimpse of the love and joy that we find in Jesus to those around us.



So now we know how to do it perhaps even more people will help with

BFG2 – The Really Big One!

BFG

A Poem by Hilary Johnson

Sunday's Big Family Gathering, well what a day
Just brilliant, more than words can say
Tern Hill Hall hosted the event
Lots of time and effort with love was spent
Folks were greeted at the gate
Come on, don't be late
Volunteers wore shirts of tangerine
Brightly dressed so easily seen
The day opened with a Happy song
Encouraging everyone to sing along
Rev Rob started with worship as we sang 'To God Be The Glory'
Illustrating a wondrous story
The 'ribbon' was cut by our local Lord Mayor
Tim Manton showed he administered with care
12pm and now let the fun start
Encouraging all to take a part
Just come and put your head in the stocks
We'll do our best to drown your locks!
The bouncy castles gave the youngsters great pleasure
Letting them enjoy a day of leisure
Face painting, messy Church, artisan and art
Just wander round nowhere to start
God looked kindly over the whole event
Just look at the weather He graciously sent
Well what about Wesley the Methodist Hound
Greeting everyone strolling around
Wow the Big Friendly Giant did appear
Brought smiles to faces and lots of cheer
Around the crowds a gingerbread man did roam
As Market Drayton is the Gingerbread's home
Carol wandered around gathering folk
For Maypole dancing, it nearly gave me a stroke!
The food Tern Hill staff cooked and put on
Was just lovely, tasty and second to none
What can I say about the wonderful bands
Lovely voices and talented hands
Singing 'I can walk 10,000 miles'
Got the people up to Congo in style
Thanks sincerely to Rev Rob, Carol and all of the team
They are just the best you've ever seen!

40 DAYS of LOVE

Experts tell us that if we do something over a prolonged period of time, it will become a new habit or lifestyle.

40 Days of Love encourages Prayer, Caring for others and Sharing our Faith over the 40 day period.

We are joining in with this international movement taking place and would love you to join us too!

1. WALK

Return to Our First Love

The first 10 days are an opportunity to prepare our own hearts and return to our first love for God. Set aside time for prayer, worship and seeking God to refresh your relationship with Him.

2. PRAYER

Pray for others

The next 10 days are set aside to pray for those God has placed around us. Family, friends, co-workers, neighbours. Anyone you feel God has placed on your heart to pray for.

3. CARE

A practical expression of Love

Turn prayer into practical expressions of love through serving those around us. Find opportunities to meet the needs of those you have been praying for and any other areas of the community in need.

4. SHARE

The Good News of Jesus

Look to share theGood News of Jesus Christ in every way possible. Share your testimony, share an invite to church. Look through this booklet for all the opportunities in addition to Sunday worship that you can invite someone to join you at church.

Let us know you're joining in with 40 days of love



For many years as a church we have had a connection with Romania. Over the years we have sent aid and support for the poor and vulnerable and assisted the church there to reach out to them. Since the end of Communism things have improved a great deal though there are still some real needs which we try to address by sending small monetary gifts for the church there to reach out to the neediest.

We also keep in touch with the Church there (Petrosani Baptist Church), we pray for them and they pray for us as a church. We maintain fellowship with them through occasional visits. The last time a small group went out was in 2023.

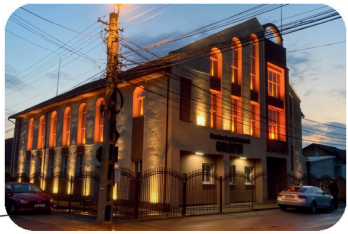
This year five of us are going in October (13th-20th), Rob Cotton, Derek & Jeannette Wanless, Robert Wiliams and Roger Baker. Though, no doubt there will be a couple of days out as they love to show us their beautiful country, there will be work that we will be engaged in. Nothing is fixed but Rob and Roger might be leading a day conference for Pastors of other churches, Jeannette is going to be leading a ladies' day, and we shall be preaching at Sunday and midweek services. Also, we will be visiting the site of a church plant they are creating in a village about 30 minutes from Petrosani.

It is also planned that we visit a residential home for the elderly where, in the 1980s, a team from MDMC built a day room extension. Recent financial gifts we've sent have been used there to buy extras for the residents who only get very basic food and accommodation. The church has also taken them on a few trips out in the summer.

Please do pray for us as we prepare to go. Pray for safety in travel, wisdom and guidance in how we share with the churches and how to be the love of God to the poor and needy we meet.

Roger Baker





Little Lights Junior Choir



Think worship is only about praying or listening to someone speak?

Think again - singing and music is an AWEsome form of worship and best of all, it can be really fun and informal

New junior choir for kids aged 5-11 years launches 11th October.
Meeting every 2nd and 4th Sunday from 3-4pm
and performing at our new alternative worship experience.
£1 per session.

A.W.E.

Alternative Worship Experience

In partnership with our new Junior Choir, A.W.E. takes place on the 2nd Sunday in the month at 4.15pm.

Starts 8th November.



Marvellous!



Songs of Praise

with Neil Baldwin

22nd November - 3.30pm - MDMC



£20 per person

Upcoming retreat

'AN ADVENT RETREAT'

led by Rev Rob Cotton
(Minister of Market Drayton & Ashley Methodist Churches)

& Rev Obeth Thevanesan
(Minister of Audlem & Nantwich Methodist Churches)

Saturday 12th December, 10am – 3pm

a day of prayer, quiet time and guided reflection,
including lunch and refreshments

book via ashleymethodist.co.uk

We have a small number of funded places available for the day, so if you would like to access one of those, please email retreats@ashleymethodist.co.uk

CHRISTMAS WORKSHOP

WREATH MAKING

WITH EMMA FROM FIELD FLORESTRY

Join us as advent starts to embrace the Christmas spirit. You will be guided through the art of crafting stunning wreaths that will add a touch of sparkle to your home.

27TH NOVEMBER

6.30PM

MARKET DRYATON METHODIST CHURCH

TICKETS £42

includes festive refreshments

BOOK AT MDMC.ORG.UK
OR USE THE QR CODE

MARKET DRAYTON
METHODIST CHURCH

Dates for your diary

OCTOBER

Sun 11th - Little Lights Junior Choir - 3-4pm - MDMC

NOVEMBER

Sun 1st - Service of Thanksgiving - 3.30pm - Ashley
Sun 8th - A.W.E - 4.15pm - MDMC
Sun 22nd - Marvellous! Songs of Praise - 3.30pm - MDMC
Fri 27th - Wreath Making - 6.30pm - MDMC
Sun 29th - Advent Circuit Service - 10.30am - MDMC
Sun 29th - Christingle - Ashley

DECEMBER

Thu 3rd - Classic Cars & Carols - 6pm - Tern Hill Hall
Sat 5th - Little Voices Concert - 7pm - MDMC
Sat 12th - Advent Retreat Day - 10am - Ashley
Tue 15th - Rock Choir Concert - 7pm - MDMC
Sat 19th - NSMYC Christmas Concert - 7pm - MDMC
Mon 21st - Family Christingle - MDMC

AND BEYOND

Jan 2027 - Alpha Course

KEEP UP TO DATE WITH US

Our churches each have a weekly news sheet, and the circuit magazine is published every 3-4 months. If you would like to be added onto the email list to receive any of the above, please send an email to circuitadmin@mdmc.org.uk and let Aimee know which you would like to receive.