

**Stockport and High Peak Missional Partnership
(United Reformed Church)**



Faith – Hope – Love – Since 1972

THE LINK



2026

"The Stockport and High Peak Missional Partnership is a Christian Church, living out the love of God by reaching into the heart of each community and responding to its needs"

Dear Friends,

Already November, where has the year gone?

Remember, remember the 5th of November, gunpowder, treason and plot.”

It's the time of year for bonfires and fireworks in commemoration of the failed 1605 Gunpowder Plot against the English Crown and Parliament, mixing civic memory, bonfires and fireworks with a complex, religious-political history.

But if we think about it, this burning of the Guy with all the noise and excitement created by the fireworks is almost a mock-execution. We go along with this because it's "traditional", we do it without really thinking about the 'why', which is to celebrate the saving of democracy over 4 centuries ago, so that's not to suggest we shouldn't, but perhaps we need to think more about our traditions as Christians.

Often our worship follows the same pattern every week and when something changes we feel uncomfortable and quietly make comments hoping it will go back to "how we've always done it".

As a "free-church" with our congregational, presbyterian backgrounds, our ancestors broke-away through the reformation to not be tied to the same liturgies and the way we were told it had to be done. And that isn't to argue against any particular form of liturgy. But we need to think why we do what we do, why do we sing, why do we pray with certain words, why do we meet collectively on a Sunday morning.

Jesus didn't give us words or ways we have to worship and praise God, but He gave us the freedom to see God in our own context, our lives and to worship God in all we live through. Our whole

lives can be in worship of God, who loves us so much He gave his only Son to live amongst us and to die for us.

So, when it comes to Christian traditions, whichever you follow, may the “*what*” always be accompanied with the “*why*” and let us be ever open to question the “*why*” as we help others come to know our God.

Have a blessed November, *Mike Aspinall*

Finding God in Scripture



GOD LOVES AND ACCEPTS YOU

*He has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness.
Colossians 1 v13 NLT*

Jimmy Wayne never knew his father, and his mother spent more time in prison than out. When Jimmy was 12, his mother was released from gaol and took up with a troublemaker. They loaded Jimmy into the back seat of their car, and for a year that was his home. Then one day, they dumped him at a Pensacola, Florida, bus station and drove off. He had no home, no future, and no provision. While wandering through a neighbourhood, he spotted an older man at work in a garage wood shop. He approached the elderly gentleman and asked if he had any work. Not only did he give Jimmy Wayne a job, but he also took him in to live with him and his wife. Having a home to live in was like heaven to Jimmy. Still, in spite of their kindness, he refused to unpack his bag. For four days, his plastic bag sat on the floor, full of clothes, ready if the husband and wife changed their minds. It took several days, a dozen or so meals, and more than one heart-to-heart conversation. But they finally persuaded Jimmy to trust them to care for him.

Perhaps you question your place in God's family or His love for you. What if He changes his mind? God answered that question at the cross. When Jesus died, the heavenly vote was forever cast in your favour. *He has rescued you from the kingdom of darkness and transferred you into the kingdom of his dear Son.*

P.S. What happened to Jimmy Wayne? He took his place in the family, got an education, and became a country music singer and songwriter.

Taken from the UCB Word For Today, written by Bob and Debby Gass. Free copies are available in the UK from United Christian Broadcasters, UCB Operations Centre, Westport Road, Stoke-on-Trent, ST6 4JF or at ucb.co.uk. Used with permission.



THE WELLSPRING WALK



A 'BIG' Thank you to everyone who was involved in the Wellspring Walk on Saturday 10th October - those who walked, those who provided refreshments at Mellor and all of

you who have donated. The money is still coming in
The walk commenced at Holy Spirit Church, Marple

Articles from Members of the Missional Partnership.....

NB: last date for the DECEMBER/JANUARY Joint Link is Saturday November 21st

Please note all paper copies of the Link will be left in separate envelopes at Marple URC in the Prayer Room. Please take your church's allocation. Thank you.

If you would like to get an early copy of The Link by email contact Terry Lomax at terry.lomax@gmail.com

From Margaret Bailey (MB)

The recorder group

The next meetings will be on Thursday 12th November at 2p.m. at my house.



Jill Kenna (M)

FAIR TRADE COFFEE MORNING

A very **BIG ‘THANK YOU’** to everyone who came to the Coffee Morning on Saturday 17th October, and to those who helped sell coffee, cakes and Fair Trade goods. We raised the magnificent sum of £602.

From Janet Burridge (M)

FREE - Home Library Service

I have been using this service for about 3 years. They are now threatened with closure if nobody else joins. I am therefore appealing to any of you who don't or can't get out to join up. You may borrow books, including large print ones, talking book CDs, and DVDs, I think jigsaws can also be borrowed. They come every

third week, without fail. So, it saves you having to trudge out in the snow and the rain.

The number to ring is 0161 474 5600

Or email homelibraryservice@stockport.gov.uk

From Ian Kenna (M)

GOOD NEWS

Globally there are 50 million more girls in school today than there were in 2015. Completion rates for females have increased from 86% to 89% in primary school and from 54% to 61% in high school, according to UNESCO.

Almost all children in Western and Central Africa attend primary school, with enrolment rising from 50% in the 1990s to nearly 90% today, the World Bank reports.

Enrolment in high school is increasing too, more than doubling in the past decade to 55%. In the Punjab, home to over half of Pakistan's population, school enrolments have doubled from 13 million to 26 million since 1998.

Sunday Times Magazine

From Lynne Cruickshank (MB)

A Very Brief report from the Autumn Synod Meeting held at Lancaster University Chaplaincy on Saturday 17th October 2026

The meeting was opened and closed by our new Moderator, Revd. Mike Thomason on the theme of 'Hope is.....'. It covered the usual business of hearing news from around the Synod churches, the various working groups and Committees working for the Synod, and the reading of various reports from those Groups.

2 Votes were carried. The first to appoint Revd. Martyn Coe as Convenor of the Lancashire and Cumbria area Pastoral Committee until Autumn 2029, and the second to endorse the proposal to appoint a Pioneer Minister to work in the Clitheroe and Bowland area and surrounding rural Lancashire rural areas.

The main business of the day and discussion in groups was centred on finance.

a. General Assembly of the URC in 2026 have asked all Synods to look at the question of finance for Mission and Ministry which is not being covered by payments made by all the URC churches in the 13 Synods. The URC is having to top up the M&M fund by £2 million each year in order to cover costs. Thoughts on this matter will go to a 2day Consultation in the New Year, where reps. from all the Synods will attend with the thoughts from discussions held at each of their Synod Meetings.

b. Discussions on this were held in groups following a short film of John Bradbury explaining the workings of the Covenant model of the M&M fund.... All pay in to benefit all and share resources where they are needed.

Following discussion in groups it was felt that we all had a patchy knowledge of what the M&M fund pays for....237 full Stipendiary Ministers, 26 part -time Stipendiary Ministers, CRCWs (Church Related Community Workers), training for Ministry, Safeguarding Training and checks for all, courses, resources and Community Coordinators, staff and offices at Church House It was suggested that our present model of Ministry, being spread so thinly, is possibly outdated and new ideas and ways of functioning should be explored.

- c. Synod finance was then discussed.
- Synod does not receive any finance from the URC as a whole. Each Synod is financed from Investment Income, the sale of church buildings and donations.
 - Like most of the 13 Synods, the Northwest Synod is spending more than it receives year by year.
 - Synod has been without a treasurer for 2 years now, even though a part- time paid role has been advertised within and without the Synod, no applications were received. The Northwest Synod is not alone amongst the 13 Synods in this quest to employ a Treasurer, and having no success. Despite this, the day to day work of the Synod finances is well managed by the present finance team.
 - Synod is working hard to find cost cutting solutions with staffing etc.

From Revd Elizabeth Sheppard (Short St)

Wrong Data!

It has come to my notice that someone thinks I have a criminal record and that I have been to prison. This is quite untrue. I worked with the police when I was in Liverpool many years ago during the Toxteth Riots. Twenty-five years ago my son and I were able to help the police catch some dangerous criminals operating in Stockport. These days the police helped me! Recently, they helped me to get a taxi home from Stepping Hill Hospital A&E.

I have heard I am not allowed to use my degree hoods and gowns! The reason I no longer wear them is that we are a **much** more relaxed sort of society today than our grandparents. Despite my eyesight problems I still feel called to the ministry of word and sacrament.

Yours in Christ, *Revd Elizabeth Sheppard*

From Ian Kenna (Marple)

QUESTION & ANSWER

QUESTION: When birds sing, does one breath complete the entire song, or only one note?

ANSWER: Neither really. Most birds sing several notes during one exhalation and take rapid breaths in between phrases that are often indistinguishable to us. The way that birds sing, and their breathing when they are singing, is very different to humans because of their anatomy.



We have a larynx at the top of the trachea (or windpipe) containing the vocal cords which vibrate when we breathe out. By contrast the vocal organ of songbirds, known as a syrinx, sits at the bottom of the windpipe at the point where it divides into two bronchi, or tubes, that lead into the lungs. The way the two halves of the syrinx can operate independently means that birds can sing on both an inhale and an exhale. A further benefit of this is that a bird can sing two different notes simultaneously. If a bird trills, for example, it is switching between the two sides of the syrinx while, thanks to this peculiarity of the birds' anatomy, some thrushes are able to sing two songs at the same time.

J Wilson, Worthing, West Sussex (Daily Mail)

From Sue Ardern (Marple)

HANDBELLS CONCERTS ...

On Saturday 14th November, 10am - 12 we're hoping to have a fundraising 'Coffee & Concert', for Wellspring. With special guest appearance from 'The Church Recorder Group'. Do join us if you can.

On Wednesday, December 2nd Festive tunes will likely be included at Strictly Come Together at Marple URC, 11a.m. – another occasion for audience participation!

New ringers are welcome to come to our practices on Tuesday evenings, 7–9 pm. at Marple URC. The first evening will be free! **Please contact Sue Ardern, or any member of the team, if you'd like to join us.**



From Keith Whiting (T&LG)

Bits and Pieces

"LEST WE FORGET"

A few days after you have read this addition of The Link you are likely to be standing at a memorial monument to remember the names of those men who died in two world wars in the last century and those who died in other wars since. In our village the family names appear in more than one conflict. It is difficult to comprehend the grief and the suffering of grandparents, mothers, dads, and children whose lives were changed and



damaged for all time. This image is witnessed in a thousand villages and towns throughout the country and further afield. Our village population last century was around 1400 voting souls. There are 34 names recorded for 1914/18, 16 for 1939/45 and 2 for other conflicts. The misery doesn't end when fighting stops - there were those who returned who needed months to physically and mentally return to normal life. Some never did.



Three weeks ago, The Commonwealth War Graves Commission installed a Plaque (see picture). It's there to remind us that a young man who served his country for 3 years, was injured in the final weeks of World War one and died in hospital in England on 8th December 1918. He is buried in the family grave in our graveyard.

Stand and remember on the 8th November all those names, on all those Plaques, in all those towns and pray that no further names are added to Plaques in the future.

Dates for December

From Phil Taylor (Hatherlow & George Lane)

Christmas Brass Band Concert at Hatherlow on Saturday 5th December - please phone Phil on 0161 989 9993 for tickets.

From Ruth Miller (Hatherlow & George Lane)

Christmas Tree Festival ...'Heroes and Villains'

Saturday 12th December - 11am-4pm - Varivocals Choir 12 noon - newly formed Romiley Community Choir 2pm

Sunday 13th December 10.45am. Carols among the trees - 3.30pm

Refreshments - soup, sandwiches, cakes.

From Ian Kenna (M)

WOODLAND PRAYER

Here, God, is where I feel close to you
And at home in myself.
Here, in the midst of a great congregation
Of stately, prayerful beech
And ancient oaks with their
corkscrew boughs.
Bluebells bow their heads.
Celandine tilt ecstatic faces heavenwards.
A chorus of birds speak in tongues,
Their fervent, multi-layered conversations
Foreign and musical to my ears.
Dappled light falls like grace
On the shadow-striped path.
The earth beneath my feet is soft and
forgiving.
There are soaring arches
To rival the greatest cathedrals,
And leaves that filter light
As beautifully as any stained glass.
Thank you, thank you, thank you,
Creator of all,
For this place where I can lose myself
And find myself
And worship you in such good company.



Cara Heafey
URC Prayer handbook

From Margaret M Jones (Short St)

'THE SECRET'

I met God in the morning when my day was at its best
And his presence came like sunrise, like a glory in my breast.

All day long the Presence lingered,
all day long He stayed with me,
and we sailed in perfect calmness, o'er a very troubled sea.

Other ships were blown and battered,
other ships were sore distressed,
But the winds that seemed to drive them,
brought to us a peace and rest.
But I thought of other mornings with a keen remorse of mind,
When I, too, had loosed the moorings
with the Presence left behind.

So I think I know the secret,
learned from many a troubled way,
You must seek Him in the morning,
if you want Him through the day.

By Ralph Spaulding Cushman.



MARPLE URC, MARPLE BRIDGE URC AND MARPLE METHODIST SERVICES IN NOVEMBER

Services in November- Please note Services start at 10.30am

1st Rev Paul Frampton (Communion)
At Marple Bridge

8th Remembrance Service-Rev Ian Coverdale
At Marple

15th Rev Margaret Dexter-Brown ***
At Marple Methodist

22nd Paul Brewerton
At Marple Bridge

29th Rev Jude Laycock
At Marple

***** Please note on Sunday 15th November following the Service, we will split into 3 church groups, which will be chaired by 3 separate Ministers, to discuss joining together to become a Local Ecumenical Partnership. For this to progress we will require a 75% vote in favour. Hope as many members as possible will be there.**

MARPLE NEWS & NOTICES



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

wishes in November go to:

Kath Leardodd (16th)

STRICTLY COME TOGETHER

Wednesday Mornings at Marple URC 10.30am-12.00

- All are welcome NOVEMBER

- 4th 'Your earliest Memory'
- 11th 'The Last call Out' (Linda Lamon Conneely)
- 18th 'Gems of China' (Elayne Mason)
- 25th Quiz

STRICTLY COME CRAFT



For children and their families on
Saturday 21st November from 4-6pm
at Marple URC

THE WELLSPRING – MARPLE

£140.91 was delivered to The Wellspring recently, along with several bags of warm clothing and shoes. When I arrived, the door was shut and a client was busy cleaning the glass in it. He immediately stopped work, opened the door and took the heavy bags from me. The receptionist asked me to give his thanks to all at church who had contributed.

Ian Kenna (M)

MARPLE BRIDGE NEWS & NOTICES



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Wishes in November to
John Northover (23rd)

Congratulations to proud
grandparents Clive and Hilary Richardson and
parents Laura and Andy on the birth of their son
Teddy.



**Saturday November 14th... 10-12 noon All
Welcome**

**Please don't forget the Book Swap – all donations to
Lend With Care**

From Colin and Cath Fox

UPDATE FROM LEND WITH CARE

With repayments from previous
loans over the past 2 months, our
account has accumulated up to
£111.70p. Using this money a loan of
£100 has been sent to the **Umoza
Mayi Wala Group** which is made
up of 15 women solar entrepreneurs



selling solar lights and spreading energy access in their community in Malawi.

This loan is part of a nationwide programme supporting groups of women who provide affordable energy access in rural communities across Malawi. Through the partnership with Lendwithcare, Umoza group will receive the loan to buy stock of Home Solar Systems to sell within their communities using a pay-as-you-go scheme allowing households to pay in instalments rather than upfront.

The impact of just one solar light on a family's life is transformational:

- * Families save on the need to buy hazardous candles or kerosene lights
- * Users feel safer at night avoiding the risks of open flames and increased security.
- * Children's educational opportunities improve with increase in homework completion after dark.

The women's group will sell each Solar Home System for approximately £42, earning a profit of £13 per unit which will be reinvested in the business to establish sustainable energy enterprises within their community.

Each system includes:

1. Three bright and efficient lights with adjustable brightness.
2. A durable solar panel and wall mounted battery hub with a user-friendly display and keypad.
3. A smart charging holder, wireless wall-mounted switch and options for future system expansion.

We hope you agree that this sounds an excellent project and represents a significant opportunity to improve livelihoods, promote renewable energy adoption and empower women to lead sustainable energy businesses in their local community.

A big thank you to all who contribute to the Lend with Care collection.

PROVIDENCE NEWS & NOTICES

Services in November

- 1st Revd Peter Sharp**
- 8th Revd David Jenkins (Remembrance Sunday)**
- 15th Dr Richard Britton**
- 22nd Revd Peter Sharp (AGM)**
- 29th Dr Gordon Stewart (Advent Sunday)**

From Gill Collins

Harvest Festival Celebrations

We had a wonderful harvest celebration at Providence this year. There was a time, many years ago, when the church would be filled with fresh fruit and vegetables to give thanks for God's creation. This year our fruit and vegetables were of the knitted variety, recycled from 'Knitted Church'. We also had wonderful sheaths of corn, hay bales, flowers and scarecrows dressed in smocks.



Our harvest gifts this year were non-perishable - we had a huge variety of items, even pet food. Everyone was so generous and it was truly amazing to see the huge pile of bags and boxes at the front of the church. Everything was taken to the New Mills Foodbank which will be a big boost to their stock. We did have a traditional tray of fruit and vegetables which was donated to the Nursery School below stairs. The children came up to see the displays and will enjoy the food that will be cooked for them.

Providence Book Group

The book that has been suggested for the next session is The Great Search by John Philip Newell, published by Wild Goose Publications (the publishing wing of the Iona Community). John Philip Newell is an internationally acclaimed spiritual teacher, speaker and author of many books and former Warden of Iona Abbey.

The dates for the meetings are: October 8th, October 22nd, November 5th, November 19th and December 3rd.

The first meeting will be at 48 Hyde Bank Road at which we will listen to a podcast where John Philip Newell talks about the book with Tim Nash.

Music for a Sunday Afternoon at Providence

Gordon Stewart plays the 1914 J.J. Binns organ in a programme that includes music by Elgar, Haydn, Bach, Grainger and Guilmant on Sunday November 15th at 3pm.

Hope to see you there!



URC Calendar 2027

This year's URC calendar is entitled 'Transparent as Glass', featuring stained glass windows from around the URC. We are pleased to announce that 'January' will show Providence's window which is above the chancel. The window depicts Simeon blessing Jesus in the temple. The calendar can be purchased from the URC Bookshop at £4.

Open Church Week

We are looking forward to 'Open Church', which takes place this year from Tuesday 8th – Friday 11th December. Please join us for organ recitals by Gordon, followed by lunch of homemade soups. it is so good to welcome visitors who return every year. Tea/coffee and mince pies are served on arrival (10.00–10.30) when we can share fellowship before the recital.

Chatty Cafe at Providence

All are welcome to drop in to our weekly chatty cafe on Wednesdays from 2pm-4pm. Good company, and home-made cakes on offer!

SHORT STREET NEWS



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

wishes in November go to:

Irene Sangster (11th)

David Lloyd (23rd), Flyn Wilkinson (24th)

Services at Short St in November at 10.30am

1st Rev. J. Austen

8th At Hazel Grove Methodist Church

15th Worship Group (C)

22nd Rev. M. Tait

29th Liz Delafield

On Saturday 21st November it is our **CHRISTMAS FAIR**.
From 10am to 1pm - Admission is 50p. Varied stalls
including handicrafts/Christmas gifts, tombola, raffle, books,
jewellery, mystery parcels, cakes, Christmas cards etc.
Refreshments are also available. All are very welcome.

On Saturday 28th November it is **Hazel Grove Christmas
lights switch-on**, at the top of Commercial
Road, outside Short Street URC from 11am
until about 6pm

There will be a variety of stalls including
refreshments, stalls at the top of
Commercial Road, in the church and possibly
in the car park. Watch Facebook for
further details.



Short Street Christmas internal post box will be in the porch
on 29th November until 15th December. Cards will be given out
on Sunday 20th December. Donations will be for the Rainbow
Trust as will be a retiring collection after the Carol Service on
the 20th December.

TINTWISTLE & GLOSSOP NEWS

Services in November

- 1st Mike Aspinall (Communion)**
- 8th Joint Remembrance Day service at Christ Church**
- 15th Alistair Cole**
- 22nd Vince Ryder**
- 29th Rev Jenny Austen**

HATHERLOW & GEORGE LANE NEWS

Services in November 10.45a.m. start

1st Rev Margaret Dexter-Brown

8th Rod Wallace

15th Elders

22nd Rev Mike Aspinall

29th Frank Dean

And finally

I sacked my tailor.

He said, "Suit yourself!"

Please could you send all items for the **JOINT
DECEMBER 2026/JANUARY 2027** edition of the
Link to Barbara Northover -
(email:northoverfamily@gmail.com) .. Thank you .

NO LATER THAN SATURDAY 21st NOVEMBER
(earlier if possible, thank you)

Thanks everyone for sending articles
early, it makes my job so much easier,
Barbara x



Please check the Pastorate website for any events, which
are happening in all churches:
www.shpurc.wordpress.com and scroll down the
page. The website is frequently updated

Stockport and High Peak Missional Partnership:

Web: www.shpurc.wordpress.com

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Office Open: Mon, Wed, Fri.

The Missional Partnership also includes **Whaley Bridge (Uniting Church)**. To find out more about each church and its activities, please see the new website