

Summer 2024

OUTREACH

THE QUARTERLY MAGAZINE FROM NORLEY METHODIST CHURCH

MORNING WORSHIP
HOLY COMMUNION
BAPTISMS & WEDDINGS
WEBSITE

10.45am
ONCE A MONTH
BY ARRANGEMENT WITH THE MINISTER
<http://www.norleymethodistchurch.org.uk>

MINISTER

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Dear Friends

May 2024

What do you believe? What do you believe in? Who, or what, do you have faith in? I asked those questions to two young people last week – and a very interesting conversation followed. Their views were that “believing” something suggested some uncertainty: “I believe that it will be sunny tomorrow” suggests that I *think* the day may be sunny; but I am by no means sure of it. Their sense was also that “having faith” in someone or something suggested a deeper level of trust and commitment. Talking about what they have faith in began a long and important discussion.

I’m not sure that those young adults were best pleased when I pointed out that in the New Testament, “believing” and “having faith” are translations of the same Greek word! So their distinctions between ‘belief’ and ‘faith’ are not there in the original bible text.

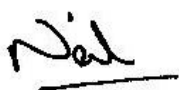
In fact, the word translated as “to have faith” or “to believe” is based on an older word, which means “to convince” or “to persuade”. To believe something, then, is to be persuaded or convinced of its truth. I wonder if that is true in your own understanding?

Many years ago, I went to visit a local preacher whose wife had just died. He told me that at her funeral he wanted to read one of the bible readings: from Paul’s letter to the Romans chapter 8. But he said that he wanted to read the version which translates the words of Paul like this: “I am *persuaded*, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:38-39) “I’m a scientist,” said the man, “so faith for me is always a matter of weighing up evidence for and against. On balance, however, I can say that I have been *persuaded* that God exists.” At the funeral service, the preacher did indeed read that passage. But he used a more modern translation, in which Paul says, “For I am convinced that neither death, nor life ... nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Afterwards he told me, “My experience of the last few weeks has convinced me of the reality of God and of God’s love and care.” Even in the difficult experiences of bereavement he had sensed the presence of God in ways which convinced him that he, his wife and family were surrounded by the love of God – holding them, comforting them, and leading them.

So, the questions with which I began – What do you believe? What do you believe in? Who, or what, do you have faith in? – are not simply word-games. All kinds of life experiences cause us to ask those questions: who and what we can trust; where we can find help and support, especially in difficult times.

My prayer for each of you reading this – and especially for those going through the pain of bereavement or struggle – is that, in all of that questioning, you may know God is with you. May you be convinced of God’s love for you and those you love.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Neil". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

Rev J. Neil Stacey

Congratulations

- *to **Molly Vickers** who gained her Msc. On the 15/03/2024 our church member Molly Vickers attended her Postgraduate Graduation ceremony in which she received a MSc in Biomedical Science. In addition to this Molly is currently working at the Countess of Chester Hospital in the Blood Sciences department as a Pathology Biomedical Laboratorist.*
- *to **George Gifford** (and parents **Katy** and **Owen** and of course grandparents **Peter** and **Sue Levitt**) on the occasion of his christening on 14 April 2024.*

Thank you

- *To all at Norley, a huge thank you to everyone for your hard work, manpower, head power, parking and car control in getting things able to run seemingly without a hitch for James funeral. Also, we are all so grateful to everyone for your support during this time. Love & prayers. Hazel, Andy, Vickie & David.*

Welcome....

- *To **Katy** and **George** who have started to attend the Church services. They are most welcome – and are having an extraordinary effect on the average age of the congregation.*

In Our Thoughts....

- ***Mike and Gay Wilson**, whose daughter Amy is seriously ill.*
- ***Shelagh Salter** who is seriously ill*
- ***Pauline & Pamela Gates** and their families following the passing of Peter.*
- ***Shelagh Salter** and family following the passing of John.*
- ***Hazel Dale** and family following the passing of James.*

Please remember them in your prayers.

Pastoral Piece

Seasons blessings to everyone.

Now that we are suppose to be into *summertime* ☀️☀️ could we risk putting our wellies and umbrellas away 🌂🌂. With all the rain we have had it's a wonder we haven't got webbed feet. One consolation, it is lovely having the lighter evenings.

Here's hoping we have a good summer, so whatever your plans are holidays, days out, or just relaxing in the garden, keep well and enjoy.

Many thanks to our Pastoral team who continue to do pastoral duties diligently. We are always ready to help when needed.

Until next time I leave you with these words from Helen Steiner Rice.

Each Day Brings a Chance to do Better.

*How often we wish for another chance to make a fresh beginning,
A chance to blot out our mistakes and change failure into winning,
And it does not take a special time to make a brand-new start,
It only takes the deep desire to try with all our heart.*

*To live a little better and to always be forgiving
And to add a little *sunshine* to the world in which we're living.
So never give up in deep despair and think that you are through,
For there*s always tomorrow and a chance to start anew*

Take care. Blessings to you and yours.

Margaret Hogan 6/5/2024

Church Council Meeting – March 2024

The Church Council met on 12th March and was Chaired by Rev'd Neil Stacey. The main points from the reports from the spiritual committee, pastoral committee, finance, and property are covered elsewhere in Outreach. Here is a summary of other items discussed:

Storing and sharing our information: Since the meeting in October last year, members of the CLT have reviewed the range of information that the Church holds, and checked that it is held securely, accessible when required, shared with appropriate agreement, and disposed of safely when no longer required (a data mapping exercise). This has turned into quite an extensive piece of work and is nearing completion. Whilst checking the information held in various places, we have realised that the baptismal record held in our large safe has records going back to 1843 – a document of significant historic interest to the Church and the village!

The 'café project' report from Mike Wilson, highlighted that a group of Church members and local residents have been meeting to develop ideas about a community café which could be run on our premises one day per week (more about this in the follow-on report below).

Our links with Norley School continue to develop. As well as Michael Gough recently being appointed as a Governor, the school have been delighted to welcome back Rev'd Sue Levitt to lead a monthly assembly – both Sue and the pupils are greatly enjoying becoming re-acquainted!

Change of Senior Property Steward: John Dimelow has now taken over from Bruce Lane as Senior Property Steward. Lewis is also a Property Steward and Bruce will continue to be on hand to provide advice and 'consultancy'. We are very grateful to John, Lewis and Bruce for the work they have done, and continue to do – many Churches are not so fortunate in having willing volunteers to take on this role.

Circuit update: Neil and Circuit Steward Simon Kelly provided an update from the Circuit. At the time of meeting, no 'match' had been found for any of the vacancies within the North Cheshire Circuit, those being Superintendent Minister, Minister for the Rural Churches

(including Norley), and a Deacon. Since the meeting we have been notified that the Rev'd Gordon Greswell will be joining us as our new Superintendent Minister, although there is no further news about the other two vacancies.

Additional Church Council meeting held on Sunday 21st April.

An additional Church Council meeting was held on Sunday 21st April. This meeting was Chaired by Rev'd Peter Levitt and had a single agenda item - for the Church Council to consider a paper and proposals from the 'café development group'. The first proposal considered was for us to run a café for the local community, one half day per week, in the Open Door Room. The paper presented gave a lot of detail about the café model proposed: It would be set up as an 'internal organisation' within the Church, and there was detail given about what it would look like, what it would offer, and that it would be supported by some members of the Church together with some local residents who have expressed interest in volunteering. The Church Council supported this proposal by a majority vote.

The second proposal for us to approach the North Cheshire Circuit for funding to cover start-up costs triggered considerable discussion. It became clear that in the Council's view, in order to take forward the model proposed, an identified lead from the Church would be required, and a Treasurer. There was also agreement that some local raising of funds towards start-up costs should be considered before the Circuit was approached.

The conclusion was that further discussion was required in the Church Leadership Team, and in the café development group, to find a way of addressing these issues and finding a way forward.

Lesley Gough , Church Council Secretary

First Wednesday Walks

March's First Wednesday Walk was led by Peter & Sheila. Eleven of us started from Barnes Bridge Gates car park and proceeded south along the main path. After crossing the railway line, we turned left and followed the railway to the Visitor Centre, where we stopped for

refreshments. At this point, half the party decided to retrace their steps to the car park, while the rest of us crossed back over the railway, through the 'Go Ape' setup and round the eastern and northern sides of Blakemere Moss, before returning to the cars. We then drove to The Carriers' where the whole party had lunch (including Betty Knight and John Leach the non-walkers).

Peter

The April First Wednesday walk led by Vaughan and Garry was a return visit to Alyn Waters Country Park near Wrexham. The weather was not very kind, but ten walkers participated. Part way through the trail we split into two groups with one taking the shorter walk on the level while the more determined folk took a longer route down to the river Alyn. The river was very full and fast flowing, quite spectacular... but then of course came the

walk back up the hill to the car park and café where we had a welcome cuppa. A hearty lunch was taken at the nearby Holly Bush.

Garry

After meeting at the Church and having lengthy discussions as to how we would minimize the number of cars we could manage with, we set off for a small parking area at Waterloo Lane on the north side of Delamere Forest. The walk, or rather easy stroll, entered the forest and passed through the Forestry Commission development of some 70 plus holiday lodges. You may recall the local uproar this had caused few years ago when planning permission was granted nationally against much local opposition, so it was interesting to see the finished article. Worth a visit to make one's own mind up. Even more worth a visit was the café which served excellent coffee. After another short stroll back to the cars we made our way to the Carriers Inn for lunch.

Richard

Future walks are: -

5th June led by Anthony & Heather

3rd July led by Bruce & Ruth

7th August led by Garry & Vaughan

Why not join us for a walk in good company?

Bruce Lane

Finance Report

In 1955, the late Len Shackleton, a Sunderland footballer of considerable but unpredictable talent, published his autobiography, 'Clown Prince of Soccer'. It caused a sensation in the town – I know, because I lived there at the time. Courtesy of my grandma's library ticket, she was able to borrow it and I was able to read it. Indeed, I'd watched his mesmerizing skills on Roker Park on many occasions in the preceding four years. He retired and ran a newsagent/confectioner shop at Seaburn, just down the road from the manse in which I dwelt as a lad between the ages of 9 and 14.

The stunning and enduring highlight of the book was chapter 9, entitled 'The average director's knowledge of football'. The page was then deliberately left blank – that was it. It caused a furore at Sunderland FC and many red faces elsewhere, but it sold copies and most likely contained grains of truth.

This anecdote may seem utterly remote from the financial position at Norley Methodist Church, but until the circuit has agreed on the assessments to be levied in 2024-25, this page has been left blank. The June Church Council will receive a full update, hopefully with numbers and words. No pages left blank!

John Bell, Treasurer.

Solar Panels Update

We have just received another £400 for the 565Kwh generated up to late March, bringing our total receipts for 12 years of operation to £22,323 from the generation of 40,900 Kwh of electricity without using a single Kg of coal.

We are looking forward to at least as much again before our contract expires after 25 years.

Bruce Lane

Property Matters

The plumbing work by Ian Potts has yet to be completed and completion of the external redecoration of the rear of the church is still awaited.

The annual boiler service and the annual fire extinguisher service and inspection have been completed since the last Outreach.

The socket has been installed by the toilets, and the defective heater replaced and the new warrantee replacement commissioned, and the hallway redecoration has been started. John and Lewis are planning redecoration of the kitchen and completion of the hallway redecoration once the plumbing work is completed.

We still await the installation of the fusion fibre hi-speed Wi-Fi into the church and have been given May as a target date for this. Once installed it is free for 6 months, and we can go ahead with upgrading the boiler controllers to Wi-Fi enabled at a cost of £350.

Bruce Lane on behalf of John and Lewis

The funeral with a difference

There were over 200 in the church and the picture of the garden shows the overflow - 250+ in total – with more lining the streets. The service was relayed into the church garden with thanks to Michael Gough.

Sleep Well James



Church Calendar

June – August 2024

Date	Time	Preacher	Activity
June			
2 nd	10.45am	Peter Levitt	Morning worship
5 th	10.00am		First Wednesday Walk
9 th	10.45pm	Neil Stacey	Holy Communion & Annual Church Meeting
13 th	7.30pm		Bible Study at The Hurst
15 th	10.00am		'Coffee Plus'
16 th	10.45am	Peter Davidson	Morning worship

23 rd	10.45am	Charlotte Truman	Morning worship
25 th	7.00pm		'Norley Church Council
30 th	10.45am	Neville Ford	Morning worship
July			
3 rd	10.00am		First Wednesday Walk
7 th	10.45am	Rev'd David Copley	Holy communion
11 th	7.30pm		Bible Study at The Hurst
13 th	10.00am		'Coffee Plus'
14 th	10.45am	Michael Gough	Morning worship
16 th	7.30pm		Preachers' meeting at Norley
19 th	12.15pm		Soup & Pud Lunch
21 st	10.45am	Rosemary Wass	Morning worship
28 th	10.45am	Ian Rigby	Morning worship
31 st	12.15pm		Soup & Pud Lunch

August			
4 th	10.45pm	Anne Gibson	Morning worship
7 th	10.00am		First Wednesday Walk
8 th	7.30pm		Bible Study at The Hurst
10 th	10.00am		'Coffee Plus'
11 th	10.45am	Sue Levitt	Holy communion
18 th	10.45am	Mike Ridley	Morning worship
25 th	10.00am	Ruth Lane	United Service at The Hurst
30 th	7.00pm		Welcome Service for new Circuit Superintendent at Frodsham

Christian Aid 2024 – focus: Burundi

Dear Friends, thank you for your ongoing donations. Last year, a grand total of £90.6m was raised and spent on 275 projects, with positive impact on over 3m people!

This year, the focus is on one of the poorest countries in the world, Burundi. Many people live in poverty, and most rely on farming to provide food to both eat and sell. Families in Burundi grow fruit and vegetables such as bananas, sweet potatoes, and beans, plus sugarcane, tea, and coffee. Farming is hard work, but it's being made even harder because Burundi, like many places, is now being impacted by the climate crisis.

Christian Aid has three local partners in Burundi that have vital local knowledge. Christian Aid supports and invests in local partners who are then able to deliver even more life changing support.

Norley Methodist Church is having an envelope collection to contribute to the annual collection by Norley Village. The envelopes will be available from Sunday 12th May and collected on Sunday 19th May. If you can, please donate (please make cheques out to Norley Methodist Church so that our Treasurer can add Gift Aid). Alternatively, you can donate online here:

<https://fundraise.christianaid.org.uk/envelope-2024/ca-week-2024>

(please don't forget to add Gift Aid if appropriate). Donations will be accepted via the e-envelope until July 2024. Your help is most gratefully received.

Michael Gough

Co-ordinator, Norley CA Group

Spiritual Committee

Lent Liturgy

Our Easter acts of worship this year included a prayerful Lenten Liturgy themed on 'Liberation'. Liberation theology assumes context. The context for the first five weeks were liberation from poverty, from discrimination (racial, gender, sexuality), of the 'innocents' (those suffering from conflict), health and ability/disability, and the planet and those who are eco-dependent.

Week six reflected on the context of 'none of the above', of self with particular emphasis on the developed world who sit 'above' others. Are we not in need of liberation too?

Gracious God, You gave me life; may all that I am and all that I do be to Your glory.

Lord Jesus, You called me by name; I hear You. Free me from the things that dazzle and distract me. Free me from myself, my ego, my possessions, my prejudices. Dampen my consumerism and keep me focused on You. Help me to see You in the eyes of the oppressed and respond to them as You did.

Holy Spirit, keep moving me to be welcoming, accepting, non-judgemental, and enabling, a bringer of peace, comfort, hope, and love to my neighbours here, near and far.

Give me the grace to serve and be served.

Amen.

Easter services

On Good Friday we were led in a reflective service led by Rev'd Sue, and joyfully on Easter Sunday by Rev'd David Copley.

Norley CE Primary School

It is most pleasing to report a growing relationship with our Anglican brothers and sisters in Norley, and particularly, the Chapel's involvement with Norley CE Primary School. Rev'd Sue Levitt is now leading school assemblies once per month, and on May 16th the Chapel will host the school children in a 'Prayer Day'.

The theme of the day will be '**Global Neighbours**', adopted from Christian Aid's programme of the same name.

Attending the chapel in their year-groups, the children will visit five 'prayer stations' orientated towards a different aspect of being a 'good neighbour'. In preparation for the day, a school assembly on the theme of Global Neighbours has been held, and the children have defined the Prayer Stations to be focused on:

- **Friendship:** (John 15:14-15 MSG) "You are my **friends** when you do the things I command you."
- **Togetherness:** (Matt 18:20 NIV) "... where two or three **gather in my name**, there am I with them."
- **Kindness:** (Matt 25:40 MSG) "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, **you did for me.**"
- **Encouragement:** (Matt 5:16 NLT) "... **let your light shine out for all to see**, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father."
- **Sharing/Love:** (Mark 12:30-31 NIV): "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. ... **Love your neighbour as yourself.** There are no greater commandments than these."

Wishing you all every blessing and a prayerful Summer.

Michael Gough

Chair, Spiritual Committee

*... a lamp to my feet,
and a light to my path*

Michael Gough

NOW AVAILABLE



www.michaelgoughmusic.co.uk

Annual Church Meeting – Sunday 9th June

- The Annual Church Meeting will follow the morning service on the 9th June.
- Everyone who attends Norley Methodist Church is invited to attend and to be part of the discussion when we look back over the year and consider key issues for our Church, agree which external charities we will support, and elect our Stewards and Church Council members for the coming year.
- Please come along and be part of the conversation!



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Norley Methodist Church

Coffee +

10.00 – 12.00

Saturday 15th June

Saturday 13th July

Saturday 10th August

No charge – donations welcomed



We continue to enjoy our monthly coffee mornings. Although numbers have been a bit lower during the winter months, the fellowship and conversation remains as strong as ever - as does the enjoyment of the quizzes.

We were joined one morning by a cyclist from Manchester who was in training for a long-distance ride. This is the second long distance cyclist who has been tempted by the offer of free coffee and cakes both of whom we sent on their way with a goody bag of cakes.

We will be continuing with Coffee + over the summer months and may even venture outside weather permitting. It will also give me plenty of chance to practice my cheese scones ready for the Village Garden show in September!

Thanks as always to everyone who helps to make the mornings happen by helping set up, providing cakes and serving/washing up on the day.

Ruth H

Church Council Meeting – Tuesday 25th June



- The next Church Council meeting will be held at the Church on Tuesday 25th June, starting at **7pm**.
- Please let Lesley know if you cannot attend, or if you have any items you would like raised as 'other business'. Thank you!

Soup and pudding lunches

**Wed 19th June and
Wed 31st July at
12.15pm***

Everyone welcome!

(Please contact info@norleymethodistchurch.org.uk to reserve your place)

*we'll be taking a break in August but 'will resume in late September!



IN MEMORIAM

Peter Gates



14 July 1939 – 20 February 2024

Peter was born 1939 in Liverpool. He had an older sister Ruth who tragically died in childhood. Then along came Ann his younger sister whom he loved and was a very good brother to over the years.

Peter's main friends were Bill and Cedric. He had known Bill since school and they got up to all sorts of 'hijinks', more than we know about. Cedric whom he met when he was learning to fly and took him sailing round the English coast a few times once they had both retired. These both remained great friends for his whole life. He had two great friends from Norley Chapel who he spent many happy hours debating and laughing with; they will have met up again in heaven - Roy and Ken.

He started work in his dad's business importing fruit on Liverpool docks - Federated Fruit Company. Peter took that business on and built it up to importing mushrooms and then bacon from Ireland to market on the mainland. He drove wagons with deliveries all over the country and as part of growing the business he learnt to fly, which also became one of his passions.

Peter met Pauline at Treloyan Manor in St Ives, Cornwall. Pauline worked there and when they met, he told her straight away he was going to marry her! She replied, 'No you won't!' Pauline was from Newcastle and Peter travelled up in a wagon to ask Pauline's parents for her hand in marriage in exchange for a basket of mushrooms! Six months later they were married and lived in Liverpool – they must have been good mushrooms!

Along came three children Pamela in 1965, Paul in 1967 and Sally in 1970. Life was full and busy, but Peter always had time for family, great holidays and days out were had. He was proud of his children though, like many fathers, he didn't often say it, but he was. To say how much we appreciate and value what our children are doing becomes even more important as they take on greater responsibilities. Pamela, Paul and Sally, in their different ways, have done so much for Peter and Pauline over the years. Pauline knows how much Peter really valued what they did, especially in more recent years.

A move to The Brackens by Hatchmere in Cheshire came in 1978 and this became home for 40 years. He always had dogs in The Brackens along with all sorts of animals; one year he even tried having sheep! The local farming friends had some laughs that year.

Peter retired (the first time) in his 40s. This did not suit him so Fast Parts was started in Northwich, selling car parts. This is still going today and is run by Paul, his son.

Unfortunately, the last 10 years have been dominated by dementia, but Peter kept the twinkle in his eyes right till the end and became a favourite amongst the lovely care workers at Chapel Fields care home, where Peter spent his final years.

Peter and Pauline have been married nearly 59 years - 60 in October – and they really have loved each other through sickness & health, for richer and poorer, in hard times and amazing times. Through the many ups and downs of life they always came back to choosing each other. Pauline was still 'sweetie' to him, and they would still snatch kisses in the kitchen before he moved to Chapel Fields in July 2021.

Peter was a person full of life and fun. He was a strong character who liked to be the boss, grabbing life by the horns, and enjoying every minute. He was heavily involved with the church all his life. Peter had a strong faith and loved running youth groups and Sunday schools, choirs and playing the organ. Both in Liverpool and Norley, he would lead groups of young people, telling them about Jesus while having plenty of fun. There were many young people's day's out with picnics in all weathers and lots of laughter.

He was a generous man too and would always be quick to help others. He had a vitality for life and never lost the wonder of nature in sunsets, clouds, flowers or new cars. He was interested in so many things and always curious, always having the time and energy to 'play'. Peter liked being around people; the house was often filled up with friends and family staying or just visiting. He had chosen an amazing wife who accommodated, catered for and enjoyed the stream of visitors too. Their home was always open.

He loved a challenge and would have a go at anything, including celebrating his 60th birthday at Alton Towers!

Apart from family and friends and business, his other passion was cars and driving or anything with an engine really – boats, planes, tractors!

Peter has influenced many people throughout his life and will be sorely missed. May the good memories you have continued to be shared with one another and even though we are well aware of how our memories can fail and let us down, God's memory never fails to hold onto and treasure all that is special about Peter and every single one of us. And so it is with a thankful heart we remember Peter, praying that he may rest in peace and rise in glory.

IN MEMORIAM

John Bert Salter



21st October 1940 - 4th April 2024

John Bert Salter (Bertie) was born in Urmston, Greater Manchester, to John and Lily Salter on 21st October 1940. John was the eldest of three and had two brothers, David and Jimmy. Jimmy sadly passed away when he was 7 years old. John's father fought in the second world war based in Burmah and returned in John's early childhood, but tragically died shortly after returning from the war and John undertook the role of supporting the family from an early age.

John served his apprenticeship as a shipwright joiner. On finishing his apprenticeship John joined John Laing construction and furthered his career attending night school to become a successful, skilful senior planning engineer. John worked on many prestigious projects including Spaghetti Junction, Faslane Nuclear Submarine Base, Warrington Hospital, Guinness Brewery, and one of the country's first 10 screen cinemas along with numerous other major construction projects.

John had a long career spanning his adult life and beyond retirement age. He was proud and passionate about his work and he mentored and supported other people starting and furthering their careers, including family members.

Alongside the love for his career, was his main love Shelagh whom he met as a student nurse at Altrincham general hospital. They married in 1970 at the Bourne methodist church, Northwich. Shelagh had been a member of that church since early childhood and John was made to feel very welcome and became an active member of that church.

Following a lovely honeymoon in Ibiza, John and Shelagh purchased their family home in Hodge Lane, Hartford. During this time they were blessed with three children, Emma, Daniel and Jonathan.

They later moved to Chapel Close, Comberbach which was to remain the family home for over 30 years. John and family grew up in a village community, the children attending the local school and clubs such as cubs, sea scouts, brownies, and guides along with the annual village fete.

John encouraged the children to play and do fun things from an early age. He made Emma a dolls house which Daniel took a shine to and Jonathan was treated to a 1984 Yellow Tea Pot which he adored.

John was a dedicated father and encouraged his children to develop their own interests and paths in life. He took Daniel and Jonathan fishing even though it wasn't his hobby, he even took the boys night fishing at Anderton boatlift in the middle of January in freezing temperatures. That's love that is!!

John would regularly take Jonathan to Goodison park to watch Everton, drop Daniel off at the train station to watch Liverpool, although the club he supported deep down was Manchester United.

John would always go above and beyond for his children to support independence. He would think nothing of picking up Emma and her friends from a nightclub in Warrington at 2am – and still get up to take her to a Saturday morning 8am weekend job. John instilled deep family values into each of his children.

Later on John and Shelagh were overjoyed to have six much loved grandchildren - Cameron, Cayden, Charlie, Matilda, Jessica and Josie. First to come along were twins Cameron and Cayden. In early retirement, Shelagh and John supported with child care for the boys 2 days a week and as they got older picked them up from primary school. John showed an active interest in the development of all his grandchildren, specifically around their sporting and musical interests: listening to Cameron's Keyboard, Cayden's flute and Josie's Drumming, watching Jessica's Basketball, Charlie's rugby and football, and Matilda's Dance.

The grandchildren visited regularly, and John loved nothing more than playing board games, cards and having fun entertaining them. Soon after John retired and the family had flown the nest, John and Shelagh decided to downsize and they moved to Cuddington, where they found a great community with lovely neighbours and settled quickly. They named their retirement bungalow ESCANA - this was where they spent their honeymoon in Ibiza.

John was a man of strong faith nurtured within the Methodist Church in Northwich beginning in Bourne Methodist Church a church built in 1980 replacing an old Primitive Methodist Chapel. That church survived for 10 years before, in the nature of the land around the town, it began to sink and it was then replaced in 1999 with what became known as Town church,

It was here that John's faith was expressed not only in prayer and worship but in a very practical way taking on the several roles - Church Steward and perhaps most importantly the role of Property Secretary, never an easy role, keeping things in order very well indeed. He is particularly remembered for his design and work in the kitchen area which still serves the people of the Circuit who use the building today. He worked in partnership with another John who also recently moved on from this life, John was the Property Secretary and between them, two good friends with the same name, they painted and decorated the same kitchen and kept it to a high standard.

The congregation when they made the decision to close as a place of worship in 2016 - a brave and sad decision, but the congregation were ageing and some had transport difficulties, so rather than someone telling them they had to close, they made the decision. It is good to know that the building still continues today as an Outreach Centre for the Church in the middle of town and has mid-week worship weekly still supported by some of the residual congregation.

John's main passion was gardening and quickly set to work to establish a beautiful garden to enjoy the outdoors. He was a master at growing sunflowers each year, his favourite variety were Russian Giants.

During their well-earned retirement John and Shelagh enjoyed many holidays visiting much of Europe and beyond. John also loved his music, bands such as ABBA and the Beatles. During his retirement, John and Shelagh attended a Lesley Garrett concert and were so impressed by this that they joined her fan club. This enabled them to hear many of her concerts, spend time with other enthusiasts visiting many parts of the country they had not explored before. Lesley was very kind to her fans and over the years they met her many, many times, so much so that Lesley refers to John and Shelagh as "dear friends". Lesley was kind enough to record a personalised video message for their Golden Wedding anniversary and a further message during the latter stages of John's life.

It was at the time of closure of Town Church in 2016 that John and Sheelagh made the decision to move their allegiance to the church here in Norley where they have been most welcome.

John loved animals and had a kind spot particularly for dogs. John has numerous dogs throughout his life, and they were part of his family. In the later stages of his life, he took great comfort from Bella and the love she gave him, Bella was always at his side and she's missing him greatly.

Sadly, John was diagnosed with Parkinsons disease in later life. He was supported by his family and friends which enabled him to remain at home as long as possible. During this period, Shelagh became his full-time carer. In late January this year, his care needs escalated to the point he required 24 hour care so he moved into Redwalls Nursing Home, Sandiway.

The grandchildren loved to visit him there and nicknamed it Grandad's Castle. John passed away there on 4th April 2024. Norley was delighted to host this service of celebration of John's life.

Lamenting and Hoping: A resurrection song for Christ and the world by Ken Howcroft.

Why, O Lord, do you seem far off? Why are you hard to find in these times of trouble, when the world is distorted, disrupted and fragmenting around us, when abuse, isolation and broken relationships surround us, and we find ourselves awash with tears in the deserts of desolation?

How has it come to this, when people rage and politicians thunder as waves of pandemics crash down upon them, and we are all drowning in sickness, poverty and war? Save us, Lord! The waters are up to our neck. Where is your healing?

So when you speak words of peace and forgiveness, how can we hear them, and experience your grace, allowing it to transform us and our ways? We have heard of new life, of new beginnings and a return to a normal reshaped from the past for the future. We have heard the talk, but how are we to walk it?

We are out of our minds with anxiety and fear, yet suddenly and unexpectedly you come to be with us, in our meetings and homes; in our conversation on a journey; and when we are striving to go back to what we did before, trying to fish but catching nothing. Again and again you come to us, gathering us for meals, strengthening us, comforting our confusion, prompting us to hear your voice as we read the scriptures in heartening new ways; miraculous banquets celebrating new life in the world, foretastes in the present of our past coming to us reformed from the future: a new heaven and earth but no longer the seas of chaos; a new paradise garden now found in the city; and a new people of God now including all peoples.

But as suddenly and unexpectedly as you come, you vanish. We cannot touch you. We cannot hold on to you. You are gone. Why abandon us, O Lord? Are you raising us up to forsake us again?

Or... are you really just going ahead, and if we share in your mission, is it there we shall see you?

Remember, you say, that heavenly banquet which we shared on that night, celebrating the triumphs of God's love rooted in the Cross. Did you see when I showed you my body that it still had the holes from the nails and the wound in my side, raised to new life?

So, Lord, are you gone from our table to be with what the world belittled, to create there your feast, sharing food with the hungry and drink with the thirsty, welcoming migrants and strangers, providing cover for those with inadequate shelter or clothing, caring for those who are sick, and visiting those locked away? Is it as we become one with you and with them that they share with us the bread of life and the wine of mercy? Is it when tears of gladness become tears of sadness that tears of sorrow become tears of joy, suffering, dying, despairingly waiting, rising and praising commingled? Is this the pain that those who seem impaired sometimes seem able to bear and redeem?

Lord, help us become an openly broken people, open to be raised to life with you, raised with wounds still in hands and side. As you wept over Lazarus with Martha and Mary, and wept over the city, both institutions and people, may we weep with those who weep fresh tears of grace, and discover in you the grace of tears.

April 2021; revised Easter 2024

IN MEMORIAM

James Clarkson Dale



12 July 1942 – 17 April 2024

James knew and experienced God's love and care in his own life and was committed to sharing it with others.... with his friends, in fact with anybody he happened to meet and most especially with his family.

His faith meant such a lot to him, and one of Rev Sue's many abiding memories of James is him singing with the Band of Hope and Joy here on this platform. He loved singing his praise to God and sharing that joy through music... you could see it in his face... and it is good that Saro who led that group is able to be here and play for us today.

Arthur spoke on behalf of the family saying: -

I suppose my first memories of Uncle James were Christmas lunch at Greenacres and spending boxing day at Brown Moss. But what sticks out most prominently growing up, is the Sunday nights here at Church. Normally the preacher made it to the pulpit before the Dales had made it to their Church seats, because they had only just finished milking and when the long, not always very interesting, service had finished all the teenagers would head straight to the back right corner of chapel where Uncle James, Auntie Hazel, Andrew, Vicki and David sat. Uncle James always had the same greeting "how ya doing mate?" He was always pleased to see us.

When the other grown-ups were too busy doing whatever they did, he was always relaxed, happy and comfortable. Nothing particularly earthshattering happened apart from the night Margaret put my whoopee cushion under Uncle James' seat.

Uncle James was born on the 12th of July 1942 at Brown Moss in Norley. Grandma and Grandad Dale had moved with my Mum from New Farm, Byley a couple of years earlier when the RAF wanted to build Byley aerodrome on New Farm. The RAF changed their minds on its location the day that Grandma and Grandad moved out. However New Farm grew the M6 instead a couple of decades later.

While Grandma and Grandad loved their family, they were people of their era and didn't show much affection. Fortunately, this void was filled by Elsie who at 14 began working for them at New Farm and moved with them to Brown Moss and lived in, she never really left. Elsie was the most beautiful person you could wish to meet; her beauty wasn't just skin deep but came from a kindness that radiated from her soul. She was a third parent, Godmother, and friend to all the family.

She was happily married to George for 50 years. It was after he died that she started to become confused. While Uncle James was giving her eulogy (Uncle James giving a speech was always a time for deep contemplation) that I realized that for Elsie, George hadn't really gone anywhere, he was in her heart, yes going home to cook his tea was going a bit far, but isn't that how it should be when you lose people you love.

Uncle James attended the original Norley Church of England school from the age of 5 to 8, taught by Mrs. Pearson. Grandma then wanted him to go to private school, like mum, but he completely refused so went instead to Kingsley County Primary school taught by Mrs. Vay and the Head teacher Mr Capper.

Childhood holidays were spent in Rhyl with Auntie Sissy Webb, and John and Barbara. Grandad Dale spent the week on the bowling green and the children spent their time on the beach. Grandad was a bowling fanatic, and the rest of his life was organised round it. I've always considered it too dangerous as a sport, Granddad would regularly arrive for lunch and tell us who had dropped dead on the bowling green that week!!!

Big family parties were regular events at Brown Moss. Grandma Dale was one of 5 sisters. Good Friday meals for the aunts. Ferreting days at each other's farms - the men would spend the day down the fields with their ferrets while the ladies would look after the food. Cousins Roger Lea and Sidney Pierpoint came to stay regularly and were particularly close.

Uncle James followed in Grandad's footsteps, he absolutely loved bowling, playing it for 70 years. He started playing at 10 in a father and son team, then with young farmers, the NFU and finally for Norley. It became his passion, and especially in later life when he looked after The Norley Bowling Green, the word obsessive might not be unfair. He once tried to teach granddaughter Lucie to play but she was looking for the 10 pins and so they had to adjourn to the playground swings.

His other big sporting passion was football, namely Manchester City, sorry it was the other one - Manchester United. One of the few occasions I can remember Uncle James travelling abroad was to watch the European Cup final with David Walker. The bathroom at Brown Moss was enormous. Uncle James would sit on the loo in goal as Andrew Vicki and David aimed a sponge ball, what could go wrong! As well as playing himself he loved to ferry David and later Harry to football practice and matches.

When James left school, he began to farm with Grandad at Brown Moss. Uncle James has always had a good sense of humour and loved his jokes. My dad was planting potatoes one day with Grandad Dale and Uncle James on an old fashioned 2 row hand planter. Uncle James started to laugh, but wouldn't say what was funny, he just kept saying "you'll laugh when I tell you." When they got to the end of the row Grandad Dale demanded to know what was so funny, only for Uncle James to tell them they had completely missed a drill out. But Grandad being Grandad didn't think it was funny at all.

He was as passionate about farming as he was in life. Wilf Clake & George Brome worked for him for years and struggled to keep up, as David said, everything was done at 100 miles an hour. Potatoes were his thing, growing over 100 acres for Golder Wonder, which was a serious amount in the 1970's. He took his HGV license and bought a wagon, so he could cart the potatoes into the factory in Widnes. Later he moved more into dairy, with Aunty Hazel and him doing most of the 3 x a day milking.

One thing I didn't know was that when Uncle James was young he had a horse called "Golden Wonder" which was strangely prophetic considering the horse came well before the crisps.

James was also a keen Young Farmer and as well as the football and bowls, he played hockey, did the shot-put, was in the tug of war team, and had a big circle of friends - Ken Harvey, David Lightfoot, Alan Duncalf, John Faulkner and Robert Dobson to name a few. Grandad Dale's pride and joy was a slate based snooker table in one of the attics at Brown Moss, and while playing snooker with some of these friends, they decided to move the snooker table, cracking the slate base in the process. If you remember Grandad, you will have a good idea how that went down. Anyone here who was present at the time, would they please explain what happened?

Uncle James also attended Kitty Oakes's Dancing classes in Northwich with Frank Wilding, from what I can gather it was the closest the 1960's had to a tinder box for ladies. However, it was at Young Farmers Dance at Northwich Memorial Hall where Uncle James first started chatting to Aunty Hazel. The chat didn't quite work, Aunty Hazel decided it was time to move on so excused herself to go to the loo and didn't come back. Luckily for Uncle James they were seated together at Philip Webbs 21st and that began three years of courtship.

They were married in 1968 Ken Harvey was best man, my mum wore a maternity dress, that was because of me, Thomas my brother wore teal chiffon and brown velvet, still one of his favourite looks.

The happy couple moved into Brown Moss taking over the tenancy, Andrew was born in 1970, Vicki in 1972, and David in 1974. Every Christmas Eve he had his annual shopping trip to Northwich, firstly with the children and then with grandchildren. He bought all the girls in the family charm bracelets and then added charms every year after that, and Aunty

Hazel had a Doulton lady every year, but it must be said that 55 figurines is a lot. He would regularly get pictures printed off, or put onto mugs for people, just because he thought they would like them. He knew the girl in Max Spielmann by name.

As a parent all you really want is for your children to be happy. Andrew has found this with Jo, Vickie with Tony, Lucie, Sophie, Rory, and Jude, David with Anita, Sam, Darcy, and Harry. Not everything always ran smoothly Darcy was once forgotten in the car while Uncle James was in chapel and when Lucie and Sophie got tattoos, they were told in no uncertain terms that granddad must never know. He knew, Vickie had some serious questions to answer.

When they moved to New Pastures his love of farm machinery expanded to diggers. Andrew had bought his own, David and Uncle James set up in business together and worked happily together, till it was time for him to retire. Once when his tractor was stuck in reverse, he refused to pay for a low loader, instead leaving home at 4 am he reversed it all the way to John Bownes in Winsford then he ran home. One Christmas he told Rory he had a special present - driving the digger - the 2 of them spent boxing night sat in the cab, freezing cold, Rory had to be dragged out to go home.

Health and safety wasn't his thing, he didn't really get it. Using a ladder correctly is fine, standing in a raised loadall bucket is definitely not. Uncle James would be stood with the chainsaw on the ladder in the raised bucket possibly with the loadall on the low loader if a little more height was needed. The list of injuries he sustained from his chain saw and power tools reads like the script of an 80's horror film.

He was the family driving instructor, he helped Margaret, Thomas and I to pass our test, he also taught Lucie and Sophie how to drive a car, apparently it took Lucie a while to make it out of second gear. He taught them to handle a tractor and mower and he would sit with them driving his digger to load David with soil. He always filled their car with diesel when they came to visit. To the grandchildren the Hazel Pear in Acton bridge was always grandma's pub.....the HAZEL pear. Another passion was running originally with Vickie. For most of his 70s he was pounding the roads- amazingly fit for a man of his age

As I have said he lived and worked in top gear, never wanting to slow down or give himself time to heal. Sometimes mother nature can be very cruel. Uncle James surviving his stroke came at a high price - he suffered terribly with headaches and the easy-going light-hearted man was not always easy to find. We must try to be patient when we don't know what other people are going through. Bladder cancer first raised its head about 5 years ago, the first treatment went well until the car pulled out in front of his van last year breaking his ribs. This seemed to be a turning point that has led us to today.

Uncle James was such a sociable person, he loved to chat to people, he was still singing at the top of his voice even when he was so weak he could hardly stand, he never gave up, he never stopped. There was always a joke, there was always a joke. I'm going to finish with his last one. I'm not saying it was his best, but it was his last - I got a new job on an egg farm, I only stayed 2 weeks, I got laid off.

Good night, Uncle James sleep well.

Following Arthur's Eulogy, Hilary Merrington spoke about James' ecumenical work with St John's church, David Walker spoke of James and Manchester United and in particular about the European Cup final in Barcelona, and Ken Kenyon gave the following eulogy on James and the Bowling Club.

Outside of home and family one of James' great loves was crown green bowling. He played for 3 teams at Norley, one at Cuddington and one at Kingsley. He was a very good bowler but not a conventional one! The majority of players have black bowls, but not James. His were bright red – Man United red. And he was always very vocal both on the green and off it. He would sit outside the clubhouse cheering and shouting encouragement to his teammates. I can picture him now on his favourite mark at Norley - bottom left to top right corner, long and up the steep hill. He would send his bowl out, then go galloping after it, shouting "go on Mary, go on Mary". I often asked him, but never did find out which of his two balls was Mary.

Whilst he loved playing bowls, his passion was Norley Bowling Club. In many ways he WAS Norley Bowling Club. Over the years he built the huge visitor stand at the top of the green, he built the two shelters, he built the big wooden benches on the side of the green, he built the covered extension outside of the clubhouse kitchen door, he put up extra floodlighting, and he prepared and slabbed the ground for the new toilets. But more than all of these things, he looked after the green. It was his pride and joy. He was there nearly every day always doing something – scarifying, moss killing, fertilising, watering and, of course, mowing. He did this at least four days a week, often doing it twice on the same day, once across and once up and down. We would often sit together outside the clubhouse, watching a game, and he would tell me what he'd been doing, what new treatments he had tried, what ideas he'd got to improve the green – and of course, nothing to do with bowling, telling me his endless supply of silly jokes.

People at the club often wondered what on earth the club would do without James. When he became ill, he became very worried about what would happen to his bowling green, so he insisted on coming to the green to tell other people what to do, and when to do it and to show them how to use the machinery. If he were looking down now he would be pleased to see that these people are going a good job and keeping his beloved green at its best.

Norley Bowling Club owes an enormous debt of gratitude, and will never forget, Mr James Dale

So today we give thanks for the life of James for all that he has meant to us in so many different ways and we thank God for all those special memories of him which mean he will live on in our lives and in our hearts through our memories of James that we will share.... with others . And I know he will have been received into the arms of his heavenly loving Father with the words:-

Well Done my good and faithful servant.

Coffee and Flowers Rota

June to August 2024

Date			Preacher	Coffee	Flowers
June	2 nd		Peter Levitt	Heather & Anthony	Eileen Burrows
	9 th	HC & ACM	Neil Stacey	Mike & Gay	Joan Barclay
	16 th		Peter Davidson	Alison & Yvonne	Christine Gleave
	23 rd		Charlotte Truman	Mary & John	Ruth Lane
	30 th		Neville Ford	Vaughan & Yvonne	Alison Twinn
July	7 th	HC	David Copley	Di & Richard	Heather Davies
	14 th		Michael Gough	Peter & Sue	Lesley Gough
	21 st		Rosemary Wass	Mary & John	Ruth Hosker
	28 th		Ian Rigby	Heather & Anthony	Beryl Richards
August	4 th		Anne Gibson	Alison & Yvonne	Sue Levitt
	11 th	HC	Sue Levitt	Mike & Gay	Gay Wilson
	18 th		Mike Ridley	Di & Richard	Hazel Dale
	25 th	Joint Service at The Hurst			

Norley Church Preachers, Stewards and Musicians

Date			Preacher	Music	Stewards			
					Church	Welcome	Communion	
June	2 nd		Peter Levitt	Jean	Ruth L & Bruce	Yvonne		
	9 th	HC & ACM	Neil Stacey	John	Lesley & John	Philip	Alison & Yvonne	
	16 th		Peter Davidson	Jean	Ruth H & Mary	Vaughan		
	23 rd		Charlotte Truman	Jean	Ruth L & Bruce	Alison		
	30 th		Neville Ford	Alan Wright	Philip & Mary	Oliver		
July	7 th	HC	David Copley	Jean	Philip & John	Joan	Alison & Yvonne	
	14 th		Michael Gough	Lesley & John	Ruth H & Lesley	Mike & Gay		
	21 st		Rosemary Wass	Lesley	Ruth H & Philip	Yvonne		
	28 th		Ian Rigby	Jean	Lesley & Mary	Philip		
August	4 th		Anne Gibson	Lesley	Mary & John	Vaughan		
	11 th	HC	Sue Levitt	Saro	Lesley & Ruth	Oliver	Alison & Yvonne	
	18 th		Mike Ridley	John	Philip & Bruce	Joan		
	25 th		10.00am US at The Hurst, Ruth Lane preaching					