



Ainsdale Village Community Garden

Take some time to sit and stare
and have a moments peace from care.
To stop and feel the gentle breeze,
see the flowers, hear the bees.
There's not a better place it seems,
for quiet prayers and sweet day dreams.

A poem by Bev Bush



The Messenger

Ainsdale Village Church

United Reformed/Baptist

Station Road, Ainsdale, PR8 3HW

August/September 2023

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

Philippians Chapter 4, verse 6.



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Dear Friends,

Forever – is composed of Nows –
'Tis not a different time –
Except for Infiniteness –
And Latitude of Home –

From this – experienced Here –
Remove the Dates – to These –
Let Months dissolve in further Months –
And Years – exhale in Years –

Without Debate – or Pause –
Or Celebrated Days –
No different Our Years would be
From Anno Dominies –"

Emily Dickinson

We often spend our time looking towards the future or reliving the past. As I approach retirement, there is a temptation to look forward to 1st April next year and make plans (such as where we are going to live and what I am going to do with my time). I am sure that we are all guilty at one time or another of living in the future as we contemplate a holiday in a few months or make plans for some activity or other.

I found myself doing that recently and then I stopped myself. "What about the time in between?" I asked myself. There are just over two weeks before we go on our holiday – that's sixteen days. Surely these are a gift. We can become so absorbed in the future that we forget the here and now. One of the things about the mindfulness movement is that it focuses entirely on the present. We can savour the sensations, taste and smell and sounds of a particular moment. Often we get so busy that we fail to do so. For example, we at Ainsdale Village Church are blessed with the wonderful Community Garden. It requires a lot of hard work from our gardening team and we are very grateful for the hours that they put in to maintaining it with its blaze of colour. But I do hope that we all also take time to stop and enjoy its beauty.

What is this life if, full of care, we have no time to stand and stare? - wrote WH Davies in his poem "Leisure" in 1911. On those conveniently placed benches we can not only stare but listen to birdsong, the hum of a bee going about its work and enjoy the scent of the flowers. Maybe we can meet someone and enjoy their company for a while.

Calendar for September

Sunday 3 September Holy Communion at 9.45 am – **Janice Hill**

Sunday 10 September Service at **Ainsdale Methodist Church**
at 10.45 am.

Monday 11 September Ladies Group at 7.00 pm in the vestry.
See item in magazine.

Sunday 17 September Harvest Festival at 9.45 am –
Robert Shallcross

Sunday 24 September Morning Worship at 9.45 am –
our first DIY service

Tuesday 26 September Prayer in the church from 11.30 am.



Calendar for August

- Saturday 5 August** Church Gift Day in the vestry from 11.00 am – 1.00 pm. Refreshments will be provided – see item in magazine.
- Saturday 5 August** Collection of items for Southport Soup Kitchen at the same time as Gift Day.
- Sunday 6 August** Holy Communion at 9.45 am. **Jeremy Lister.**
- Sunday 13 August** Service at **Ainsdale Methodist Church** at 10.45 am.
- Monday 14 August** Ladies Group at 7.00 pm in the vestry. See item in magazine.
- Sunday 20 August** Morning Worship at 9.45 am – **Keith Trencher** from Leyland Road Church
- Sunday 27 August** Morning Worship at 9.45 am. **Peter Lyth.** Ainsdale Methodist Church worshipping with us.
- Tuesday 29 August** Prayer in the church from 11.30 am



But what of the times when we make time and we do have a special encounter – perhaps seeing a wonderful scene? We can spend so much time and energy preserving the moment that we don't actually get to enjoy it there and then.

So often, especially with the advent of mobile phones, it is tempting to snap away, or maybe take a film and see the world through the screen of our phone rather than enjoying the moment in all its glory. Even Peter was guilty of this when, at the mountaintop he saw Jesus transfigured. His first thought was to preserve things for prosperity with booths for Jesus, Moses and Elijah rather than basking in the wonder of that fleeting and unrepeatable moment.

Our lives are full of tiny moments to be savoured and which can easily be overlooked in the headlong rush to be busy or to look to the future. I'm sure that God has put them – this succession of Nows there, not as a distraction but a reminder that he is still present, even if sometimes we are too busy to notice.

Peter

Sunday Rotas

	Door	Communion	Reader	Flowers	Tea/Coffee
6th Aug	Ann Swift	Wendy Parry Jenny Boulton	Beverly Bush	Wendy Parry	Ann Swift
13 Aug	Service at Ainsdale Methodist Church at 10.45 am				
20 Aug	Jenny Boulton		Jenny Boulton	Stella Tomlinson	Jenny Boulton
27 Aug	Jenny Boulton		Imelda Aspinall	Suzette Gorman	Imelda Aspinall
3 Sept	Jean Harding	Joan Green Ann Swift	Beverly Bush	Gay Dowie	Donna Barnacle
10 Sept	Service at Ainsdale Methodist Church at 10.45 am				
17 Sept	Jean Harding		Christine Holford	Harvest Festival	Joan Green
24 Sept	Jean Harding		Janice Hill	Stella Tomlinson	Norma Naisbett

Concert by Ainsdale Village Singers

This was a lovely event, held in the large hall now that the choir has more members than can be comfortably accommodated in the church itself. We had a full house who all seemed to enjoy the choir items, the piano duets from Stewart Hankinson, choir director, and Brenda Redmond our accompanist, and the beautiful songs from soloist, Sarah McEntee.

Thanks to all of you who attended.

Jenny



Photo kindly shared by Councillor Janet Harrison

Soup Kitchen

On **Saturday 5 August**, when we are holding our **Gift Day**, it is also the usual day for collecting items for the Soup Kitchen. Therefore, Soup Kitchen items will be collected as normal, at the same time, and the theme of giving is very appropriate as we ask for support for our Church, which in turn gives very valuable support to the Southport Soup Kitchen.

Church Finances: Where the Money Goes

I thought it might be helpful to explain how the **Maintenance of the Ministry Fund** operates.

All URC churches pay monthly into the fund, which pays for Ministers' salaries, pensions and training, plus a contribution to the administration of the church at national level.

In 2023 the full cost was £375 per member (the same as last year), but as we are in a Local Ecumenical Partnership (URC and Baptist), a ten per cent discount applies, so we pay £337.50 per member. This is £6.49 per member per week. So, with eighteen members this year, we will pay £6075 into the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund.

The five URC churches in the Southport and Formby area also pay, according to size, into the Team Ministry Fund. This year our contribution is £972 (£81 per month). The fund pays for telephone costs, car allowance, Ministers' expenses, stationery, and a proportion of manse expenses. When Hilary joined us the costs increased, so when Peter retires next year, the Team Ministry costs will decrease.

Gas and Electricity: As we have just come to the end of our existing fixed price contracts, and moved to new suppliers, it is worth an explanatory note.

If we use the same amount of gas and electricity as last year, then our fuel bills will increase from £2203 pa to just over twice the cost at £4860 pa which means we have to find another £51 per week.

This increase is in line with the increase in both the domestic and commercial market. We are classified as a small business, so we are in the commercial sector for prices.

Alan



Notes from the Archives – Part 5

People

In 2002, Robert Shallcross continued as our Minister and Wendy Parry was Secretary. Colin Ambrose was Treasurer and played the organ every Sunday. The deaths were reported of David Swift and Elaine Frost. On a lighter note, Beverly, Chris and Becky Bush were received into membership, with Bev soon becoming an elder.

The wedding took place of Joanna Green and Stewart Fraser. Church members enjoyed a day trip to Llangollen, organised by Joan Green with Stewart driving the coach! Barbara Henderson took care of the Hall Lettings, and Alan and Jenny organised the November 5th fireworks in the garden followed by a BBQ. Visits were organised to The Meadows with our harvest gifts, and at Christmas “a very good and enthusiastic choir sang carols with the residents under the musical direction of Colin Ambrose and Alison Hayhurst”. The Quinquennial Report on the condition of our buildings was received, and was classified as a “tremendous challenge”.

Ladies Group

Jenny organised a Beetle Drive, and Christine Holford’s Tai Chi classes were well attended. An auction of “gifts brought back from holidays”, and another un-named event together raised £162 for the Macmillan World’s Largest Coffee Morning. Peter Sutcliffe described the vineyards of south west France from picking the fruit to making the wine, plus wine tasting of course!

Brownies

The 34th Southport (Ainsdale URC) Brownie Pack, to give it its full title, had a full roll of eighteen girls, plus six who went up to Guides. The highlight of the year was visiting Pizza Express in Southport, where they created their own pizzas to take home. Two other notable events were an evening on the dunes with the Sefton Coastal Rangers, and an Open Evening with a fashion show for the parents.

Rainbows

The Rainbows celebrated their tenth birthday, and had “a very exciting year” including meeting Rainbows from previous years. In November they won the Divisional Challenge Cup with an outstanding Nativity Collage and Christmas Card display.

Pre-School

A living willow dome and tunnel was woven in the back garden, which the children, parents and leaders said was a great asset. They took part in a “Sefton Safety in the Shade” programme. The Leaders reported that the rigours of the new Ofsted National Standards continued to test them, with 50% of staff now requiring NVQ Level 3 qualifications. To this end, all the staff continued to attend courses to extend their knowledge and skills. They also managed to run a Summer Playscheme in August on three days each week. As previously reported, in most years Pre-School made a considerable contribution to Church funds.

Minister:

Rev. Peter Lyth
Tel: 01704 211919

Minister:

Rev. Hilary Smith
Tel: 01704 792235

Church Secretary:

Mrs Imelda Aspinall
Tel: 07955 874814

Church Treasurer:

Mr Daniel Doyle
Tel: 07796 687123

Deacons:

Imelda Aspinall
Beverly Bush
Joan Green

Lucinda Green
Christine Holford
Wendy Parry

Weekly Church Activities

Sunday: Morning Worship at 9.45 am

Tuesday: Gardening from 9.30 am
Coffee Morning 10.30 am – 12 noon in the Vestry
Last Tuesday in each month, Prayer for our Local Community

Thursday Knitting Group: 10.00 am at the home of
Jean Harding, 55 Leamington Road – all welcome

Friday Welcome Café: 11.00 am – 1.00 pm.
Connect Youth Group 6.00 – 7.30 pm

Church Gift Day - Saturday 5th August 11.00 am – 1.00 pm

It's our **Annual Church Gift Day** on **Saturday 5th August**, 11 to 1.00 pm.

Our Gift Day replaces our Summer and Christmas Fairs and it is an opportunity to share fellowship and, additionally, to financially gift to the Church. We have in the past all supported our Fairs so generously, maybe providing a stall, supporting other stalls, providing and purchasing refreshments. The Gift Day is the opportunity to provide the support without the overwhelming effort.

Refreshments are being served and there will be a **raffle**.

Brown envelopes are enclosed in messenger if you wish to give.

Thanking you for your kind support.

Love and blessings.

Wendy



Stalwart women of the church

In a village near Cambridge in the mid-16th century lived a woman called Etheldreda Swan. When she died, she was not wealthy, but she left a will giving directions as to how her meagre funds were to be divided.

She left 7 pence to cover funeral expenses including 2 pence for bellringers. The tolling of the bell would have reminded her fellow villagers to say a prayer for her soul. She left her best bedcover and sheet to a chapel in her parish, where possibly they could have been made into altar coverings. She left one shilling for the church bells, one shilling to pay for candles, and one shilling for the high altar, as well as 20 pence for church repairs.

Thinking of early Tudor religion, we remember the great cathedrals still standing today, but across the country, the devotion of ordinary women sustained the day-to-day life of thousands of parish churches. Church accounts of the day show that women were just as active as men in church life, if not more so.

The view might be expressed that a good Christian woman should be meek, silent and obedient, but early Tudor villages and towns were full of energetic, opinionated women organising and shaping church affairs.

So what's different today!

Jenny



WHAT NEXTEach Church noted action points

As a Team ...

It was suggested we need to consider a paid Youth Leader
More team services or more opportunities to gather together
Supports for the strengths of each Church

The session closed at 12 with prayer led by Hilary.

Dear Friends,

We have recently been exploring our church mission and gathering our ideas about how we would like to be seen as a church.

We've had various 'Being Church' meetings and this has helped us to determine our way forward and to work together, supporting one another in this. We want to be a witness to Christ in our village and to welcome others to join us, as can be from the notes from the team meeting.

We also want to make sure that everything we do in our church reflects our Christian mission. We are mindful of this in the events we run and the hall lettings that we undertake.

The halls are busy at the moment, with various groups that bring the community into our church for activities such as Rainbows, ballroom dancing, Tai Chi, Zumba, Knowsley Credit Union, Local Councillor surgeries etc...to name just a few.

We trust that as folk enter the church they feel Christ's joy and the peaceful presence of His Holy Spirit.

There are a selection of prayer boxes and cards around the church that anyone can use to request prayers. These can be found in the vestry, entrance hall, large hall and the garden. So far people have been responding to these and leaving prayers for us to bring to Christ when we gather on the last Tuesday of each month for a prayer meeting at 11.30 am. All are welcome to join us. There is obviously a need for prayer that people are identifying with.

I pray that we can take baby steps in encouraging those who visit our church to come to Christ and that the prayer boxes will be helpful for those in our village who need our prayers and they will continue to make use of them.

Bev

Notes from Team Meeting 15th July 2023 at Ainsdale Village Church
Representatives from the 5 Churches in the Team were present plus
Revd Hilary Smith.

The meeting was facilitated by Revd Janice Hill

The meeting began with the two Bible Readings below and prayer.

The Greatest Commandment Matthew 22:37-40

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

The Great Commission Matthew 28:19-20

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

This was followed by a recap of the the Being Church initiative introduced at the last meeting held on 3rd June. Each Church was then asked to give a verbal report on progress to date.

After the presentations, there was a time of reflection and discussion and the key points from this discussion were noted....

- * The common ground between all the Team Churches was acknowledged.
- * It was noted that all Churches noted Worship as the key purpose of the Church followed by Community.
- * The different strengths within the Team were acknowledged and celebrated
- * It was suggested that each Church should maybe focus on its strengths rather than try to do everything
- * The need to focus on high school age young people was noted.
- * It was also acknowledged that "one size" worship doesn't fit all and we need to look at focusing on specific groups/ages.
- * One final point ...the number of people and the age of people to do things is a problem - we may need to look at paid workers as younger people in our congregations have a lot to do and can't offer the time.

During the discussion, we noted the changes in society and that many people lack information or experience of the Christian Faith so we need to look at smaller steps to encourage people on the journey of faith.

Ladies Group

So, In June we went for another meal! I know you might find this difficult to believe but we did! Sylvia, one of the lovely gardening ladies arranged, and we went to Pebbles in Ainsdale. It was a very hot evening so the big double doors were wide open and when the storm arrived we were treated to a fantastic lightning show. The food was delicious too, a mixture of Greek and English. Eleven of us were present and it was the usual lively, chatty evening.

Imelda

In July we had scheduled a Beetle Drive, but sadly there were not enough people to make this viable, so instead we watched "West Side Story" on the screen. We then, of course, had to cheer ourselves up after the sad ending, so we enjoyed tea, coffee and lovely snacks!

For our event on 14th August, we have silk painting which will be overseen by a friend of Janice's who is called Sheila. Painting on silk is very easy, very satisfying and a lot of fun. The silk has a stencil pattern so you paint within the guidelines so no previous experience is necessary. It isn't really messy but do bring along an apron if you like. Everything else will be provided (for a small charge of £5 pp) including a card mount and envelope.

Please can you add your name to the list on the vestry notice board if you are intending to come, and bring the £5 payment with you.

The September meeting is down as a film night, but we've already done that, so maybe the postponed Beetle Drive. Again I will need names, as the event requires about 12 people to make it viable. Poster on the vestry notice board.

Jenny

Sunday 24 September

On Sunday 24 September it is proposed that we organise our own service, with hymns, readings, reflections and prayers chosen by members of the congregation.

We have no preacher booked for that day. We will have a short meeting at some time to arrange this.

Please let Jenny or Bev know if you would like to do a bible reading or read a prayer.



At the end of July we will be having our annual **North West in Bloom** inspection, so the gardeners will be tidying up, and hoping for another “Outstanding” award, which we won’t know about until October.

We had a lovely surprise when **Iris Whitaker BEM**, a member of Ainsdale Civic Society and local resident in Ainsdale, presented a cheque for £150 to the garden funds. This had been raised from sales of her new small book, “**More Memories of Old Ainsdale**” which is an interesting read if you have not already read it.

On Saturday 8 July we took part in Ainsdale Open Gardens weekend, organized annually by Ainsdale Civic Society. There was a very successful plant stall with plants grown by the gardeners and others given to us, which raised £230 for the garden. We also offered refreshments from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm and these raised in the region of £132 for the church. Many thanks to all those who gave their time to help with this, and thanks to Southport Morrisons and Ainsdale Tesco for contributions of food - most of all to Stella for her delicious scones.

Jenny



STEPPING FORWARD.....

Some years ago, a friend said of the URC, “We’re reorganising the deck chairs on the Titanic whilst the whole ship is sinking.” Quite a damning, depressing remark that I could sort of relate to, saddened as I felt at the time. Not so much now though, I feel a new energy, vitality, and enthusiasm not just within individual churches but the URC itself. One that we need to be swept up in, even if you are feeling ‘old and tired,’ as we all do from time to time!

PRAY, every day that God will lead both you, your church, and its leaders as we take our baby steps into where God is leading us. If you are running low on the energy and enthusiasm, then think glass half-full and see where it leads. The recent ‘Being Church,’ was a good start, you can read all about it in the relevant article. Next comes action, yes God leads us, but we are His children, hence the baby steps!! We are His workers, even if we are few and He will never ask more of you than you are able to do or give. And neither will we!!

Meeting together informally to share thoughts and no doubt cake we can keep up the momentum. So, keep a look-out for the next ‘getting together,’ and join if you can, share your thoughts on ideas. A Saturday or Sunday after the service, this is for everyone whether you have been with us for one year or thirty odd years! We may come up with various days, and times and see which would attract most of you. Because we all need to be a part of this.

HOPE is what shines through, what we cling to and what will carry us through. That we can become better at worshipping together and following Jesus, loving our neighbour and ourselves! I have recently done on-line training in church resilience, this also included bits of the personal and community resilience which I unfortunately missed.

This I found to be so instructive and eye-opening, I learnt so much from what is going on in other URC churches and centres, talking with people from other synods, we all have things to work through and learn from. Certainly, gave me so much to think on and put into practice in my church, youth work and personal life.

The leader of this training works out of a Church in Cambridge within the Eastern Synod, where a Solidarity Hub has been set up partly in response to the needs and desires of those, he met during his chaplaincy work. To create safe spaces for many who are LGBTQ+ and/or neuro divergent. Certainly, something I have become increasingly aware of during my working life and now in working with young people, not to mention life in general.

One of his comments at the start was, Lots of churches often say, ‘All are welcome,’ (all are human, all have something in common.) For many though they would say, ‘We are all different, will I be welcome just as I am?’ I hope so, that is what we strive for, safe spaces for everyone. Be who you are and accept everyone as they are.

Love and God Bless
Joan