

is weathering well following the Christmas season. 🌲

There's a few little buds showing on the shrubs and the dry garden is looking pretty even in winter.





*Dear friends,*

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It's good to be back up and running (well, maybe not running) again, and firstly I would like to express my appreciation for all your support after my accident, for your prayers, concern and practical help. I am deeply touched by all the love and care from you all.

Now that the year is new, and Christmas is behind us, I pray that the next few months will bring a time of joyful reflection and renewed strength for us all. The time of darkness that we experience in the Northern hemisphere during the mid-winter weeks can seem interminable but is also a chance to rest and to reflect. I've recently come across the term "wintering" as a verb – an encouragement for us not to feel guilty at wanting to be indoors more, sleeping more and generally using less energy; it's a normal state of hibernation that we do well to copy from the animals, because we all need a time of proper rest and recuperation every now and again.

I've been reminded recently, because of my own experience, of how vulnerable we all are – we are fearfully and wonderfully made, but we are also of frail flesh and gentle spirit, weak and fragile, and yet if we know ourselves to be full of God's grace and joy we are strong beyond all imagining, and if we bind ourselves to each other, all the better.

As a team of churches, we can find strength in numbers, as we support each other and meet together to discern God's message to us as Christians in this time and place, and I hope and trust that we will continue to prosper and grow. I'm reminded of Isaiah's prophecy to all of God's people: "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze...do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west."

It's wonderful to be part of God's great family, so let's enjoy being together, remembering always to give thanks to our loving Father.

*Yours in the service of our Lord,*

*Hilary*

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Rev. Hilary Smith  
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Mrs Imelda Aspinall  
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**Church Treasurer:**  
Mrs Wendy Parry  
Tel: 01704 578214

**Deacons:**  
Imelda Aspinall      Christine Holford  
Joan Green              Wendy Parry  
Lucinda Green         Ann Swift

### **Weekly Church Activities**

**Sunday:** Morning Worship at 10.00 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



### **Ladies Group**

We had a successful meeting in January to draw up a programme for 2026, with some different evenings in prospect, so I would appeal to you all to come along for our meetings – you will enjoy it! In February we are planning to have a cinema trip – to the Bijou – to watch Groundhog Day and in March, Claire Seery will be devising a quiz night for us. We always have a very convivial time at our get-togethers, especially since our lovely gardeners have joined the group.

**Jenny**

The flower rotas for 2026 are printed on coloured card and are pinned to the vestry notice board. It is hoped that people will look at these and put their name on a date to provide flowers for that Sunday.

I realise that people often wish to give flowers on certain dates which mean something to them personally, so if this is the case for you, please fill in the appropriate square on the printed rota.

I would add, however, that there are approximately **36 Sundays** in the year when flowers are required, so please try to add your name to vacant dates anyway, whether or not these have any special significance to you.

Two church people are most generous and give me money for flowers on a regular basis, but it would be really beneficial if others would give their support so that the onus does not always fall on the same people.

**Jenny**



## Community Garden

As you all know, during December, volunteers from the RAF at Woodvale came to the church and garden to do some much needed jobs for us. In the garden, they painted woodstain on the full length of the fence, no mean feat, and also moved the bench which had been sited in the corner next to the Dolce Vita, to the edge of the yellow patio, where it will be ideal in the summer when we have any events. Many thanks to all those hard-working volunteers.

There are two projects which now have to be tackled – firstly the repair of the bank where some of the sleepers have rotted and allowed the bank to collapse. We have identified a contractor who can take this job on, and once we have a detailed estimate, we will apply for funding to help with the cost. The second one is to complete the work on the lower quadrant of the garden where the Christmas Tree is placed. We will be spreading pebbles to match the other side, and putting in various drought-resistant plants. The “sand dune” will remain with planting over it to be decided.

**Jenny**

On Saturday 10 January, Alan and I went to the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall to attend the annual performance of Handel’s Messiah, given by the Liverpool Phil orchestra and choir.

We go each year and it’s always an absolute joy. The conductor this year was Laurence Cummings, who also played the harpsichord whilst conducting – what a commanding performance he gave!

There were four soloists, and this year the alto part was sung by a countertenor who had a beautiful pure voice. Apparently, many years ago, countertenors were trained in and for the church, where rules forbade female participation in choirs. The chorus for the 1742 Dublin performances of Messiah was made up of boys and men from two cathedral choirs. There is evidence that choir members, notably William Lambe and Joseph Ward, sang solos in the première, although Susannah Cibber was imported as the main alto soloist (and sang He Was Despised). It is likely that most London choruses were also male.

This year’s performance was wonderful, and the standing ovation at the end seemed as though it would never stop. It really is a great experience to hear Messiah live, so if you can find one to attend, you should go! The beautiful words from the King James Bible, which we all know and love, resonated in the solos and choruses with huge impact, and the music seems, somehow, to enhance their meaning. **What a start to 2026!**

## **SUNDAY ROTAS**

	<b>Door</b>	<b>Communion</b>	<b>Reader</b>	<b>Flowers</b>	<b>Tea/Coffee</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Feb</b>	Alan Boulton	Beverly Bush Joan Green	Beverly Bush	Beverly Bush	Hilary Musker
<b>8<sup>th</sup> Feb</b>	Morning Worship at Ainsdale Methodist Church – 10.45 am				
<b>15<sup>th</sup> Feb</b>	Jean Harding		Janice Hill	Gaye Dowie	Ann Swift
<b>22<sup>nd</sup> Feb</b>	Jean Harding		Jeremy Lister	Jenny Boulton	Norma Naisbett
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Mar</b>	Jean Harding	Jeremy Lister Ann Swift	Imelda Aspinall		Joan Green
<b>8<sup>th</sup> Mar</b>	Morning Worship at Ainsdale Methodist Church – 10.45 am				
<b>15<sup>th</sup> Mar</b>	Alan Boulton		Wendy Parry	Imelda Aspinall	Jenny Boulton
<b>22<sup>nd</sup> Mar</b>	Alan Boulton		Jenny Boulton	Beryl	Imelda Aspinall
<b>29<sup>th</sup> Mar</b>	Team Service at Churchtown URC – 10.45 am				

Previous Notes from the Archives mentioned the brass plate on the wall adjacent to the organ, referring to T.R. Megitt and F. Nelson. With no mention in the church minutes, I turned to Iris Whittaker for more information. Both men are included in the Ainsdale War Memorial booklet researched and written by Iris, and also in the Compilation of News Reports 1939-1945, entitled "Ainsdale at War".

On behalf of Ainsdale Civic Society, Joan Major and Iris Whittaker spent many hours in Southport Library identifying all the Southport newspaper reports which referred to Ainsdale. This is where I obtained the information on enemy air raids and bomb damage included in the previous Messenger. Shown below is information drawn from both publications.

### **Tom Roy Meggitt**

Flight Lieutenant Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. Died 24.9.1943 aged 27 of Staveley Road, Ainsdale. He was an old boy of Southport University School. On leaving school he was articled to Mr Lithgow, accountant of Lord Street, but in January 1935 he joined the accounts section of the RAF. After serving for two years in Iraq, he returned to England to learn to fly. He subsequently won his wings and was promoted to Sergeant-Pilot. He was later commissioned. Flight-Lieutenant Meggitt leaves a widow and three children. His funeral service was held at **Ainsdale Congregational Church** followed by cremation at Anfield Crematorium.

### **Frank Nelson**

Gunner Royal Artillery. Died 5.3.1943 aged 23.

### **War Prisoners**

Two more Ainsdale families, after waiting eighteen months for news of their relatives have received intimation that they are prisoners of war with the Japanese. Mr and Mrs A Nelson, 74 Leamington Road, received a postcard from her son Gunner Frank Nelson, who is 23, stating that he is in the best of health. He was reported missing last March in Singapore. After joining the Royal Horse Artillery in 1937, he was stationed at Singapore three years before it fell. He is a well known member of **Ainsdale Congregational Church** with which his family are associated. (*Gunner Nelson actually died on 5.3.1943 and is remembered on the Singapore Memorial*)

We have all no doubt glanced at the brass plate naming the church members who gave their lives in defence of our country, but that is all we know. Their Christian names, and that they both joined the forces well before the war started in 1939. They probably intended to make a career in the forces. As church members they would have known each other, and probably their respective families. I will now look at the brass plate differently and with some understanding of who they were.

I find it strange that in the minutes of Church Meetings and AGMs for the war years, I can find no mention of these deaths. Frank was the son of Senior Deacon Edward Nelson and his wife Annise.

**Alan**



This old photo of Ainsdale Village Church was kindly shared on <https://www.facebook.com/Ainsdale/>



Ainsdale Village Church in 2026

## Calendar for February

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**Sun 1<sup>st</sup>** Holy Communion at 10.00 am – Janice Hill  
with Janet playing the organ

**Mon 2<sup>nd</sup>** Ladies Group trip to the Bijou Cinema –  
see item in magazine

**Sun 8<sup>th</sup>** Morning Worship at Ainsdale Methodist Church at 10.45 am

**Sun 15<sup>th</sup>** Morning Worship at 10.00 am – Keith Trencher  
with Janet playing the organ

**Tue 17<sup>th</sup>** Deacons' Meeting at 7.30 pm in the vestry

**Sun 22<sup>nd</sup>** Morning Worship at 10.00 am – Church Led –

Janet playing the organ and Ainsdale Methodist congregation will be with us.

**Tue 24<sup>th</sup>** Prayer in the Church from 11.00 am

### Churches Together week of 'Prayer for Christian Unity' 18-25th Jan 2026.

We started our week of prayer with a great gathering at Ainsdale Village Church led by Rev. Janice Hill. Janice invited us to explore ideas around what church unity means for us today.



## Calendar for March

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**Sun 1<sup>st</sup>** Holy Communion at 10.00 am – Hilary Smith

**Sun 8<sup>th</sup>** Morning Worship at Ainsdale Methodist Church at 10.45 am

**Mon 9<sup>th</sup>** Ladies Group meeting at 7.00 pm in the vestry.

See item in magazine.

**Tue 10<sup>th</sup>** Deacons' Meeting at 7.30 pm in the vestry

**Sun 15<sup>th</sup>** Morning Worship at 10.00 am – Keith Trencher  
with Janet playing the organ.

**Sun 22<sup>nd</sup>** Morning Worship at 10.00 am – Peter Lyth, and  
Ainsdale Methodist congregation will be with us.

**Sun 29<sup>th</sup>** Team Service at Churchtown URC at 10.45 am –  
Synod Moderator



Warm Spaces at [Ainsdale Village Church](#) vestry -Friday mornings.

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10.30am - 1.30pm.

All welcome! 😊

# Warm Space Café

*A warm welcome, a hot meal, and time to sit.*



*Join us every Friday, 10:30am–1:30pm  
for hot soup, homemade cake and good company.*

*Whether you come for warmth, company,  
or simply a quiet place to be,  
you are very welcome.*

*No payment needed  
Donations welcome if you wish*

*📍 Ainsdale village church Vestry*

# WARM SPACES PRESENTS: NEW YEAR PARTY 2026!

We didn't have a Christmas party...  
So we had a **new year party** today!



Cheers to 2026! 🍷

At Ainsdale Village Church's Friday Warm Spaces Cafe, we swapped a Christmas party for a joyful New Year celebration today – and what a fantastic time we had!

Our community came together over shared food, lots of laughter, and heartfelt toasts to the year ahead. It was the perfect way to start 2026 as one big village family.

Warm Spaces runs every Friday at Ainsdale Village Church – fancy joining us for good company and great food next week? ✨