

# The Messenger

## Ainsdale Village Church

### United Reformed/Baptist

Station Road, Ainsdale, PR8 3HW

### April/May 2026

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead

**1 Peter, Chapter 1, verse 3**



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I have just returned from a walk in the rain, with such a feeling of gratitude that I can go out again when I choose and smell the new life around me as the winter ends, that I realise how much I have taken for granted and how good it is to be part of this world, even with all its troubles and challenges.

I was reminded this week of the power of resurrection, ironically, in the death of the singer Neil Sedaka who I have adored for most of my adult life – I preferred his lesser known songs, like “The Hungry Years,” which spoke of the yearning to go back to a simple, poorer time in his life, before worldly success and wealth spoiled everything; and another song called “Beginning to breathe again”, which was about his finding himself and setting off in a new direction and feeling the power of his freedom to be himself at last.

This Easter season we are reminded of the ever-present opportunity for new life, for something good coming out of that which is past and gone, for different options and new ways of being, and for each of these we need courage, grace and a sense of adventure. I’m still feeling a little fragile after my accident, but I thank you all for your prayers and I know Jesus is healing me.

For Christians, Jesus gives us all that we need, when we need it, and to lean on his understanding and company is a great comfort in our daily life. God has said, “See, I am doing a new thing” – and He does it every day in the recreation of the world and of our lives. Within the teachings of Jesus we find hidden gems along the way, stories of forgiveness and justice, of looking beyond the obvious and of finding treasure in the simplest of things. These are hallmarks of the parables, and if we consciously look for messages of the Gospel in the world around us, we will see them everywhere.

I’m going to remind myself more of the freedom that God has given me, of the joy of living within the teachings of Jesus, and of the satisfaction given with a day to day journey with my Lord and Saviour, who is quoted in John Ch 8: “If you abide in my word, you are my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

*Happy Easter to you all.*

*Yours in the service of our Lord,*

***Hilary***

**Minister:** Rev. Hilary Smith  
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**Church Secretary**  
Mrs Imelda Aspinall  
Tel: 07955 874814

**Church Treasurer:**  
Mrs Wendy Parry  
Tel: 01704 578214

**Deacons:**  
Imelda Aspinall  
Christine Holford  
Joan Green

Lucinda Green  
Ann Swift  
Wendy Parry

### 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

### Flowers in church

The following dates are not yet filled for flowers to be provided for the church:

Sunday 19 April, Sundays, 17 and 24 May.

Please let me know if you are able to help with this.

**Many thanks,**

**Jenny**



You'll be able to see the fruits of our gardeners' efforts when you look at the lower section of the Community Garden. In the lower section next to the Dolce Vita, three tons (yes **3 tons!**) of varying sized pebbles have been spread where there was originally a rather patchy lawn.

Included in the design of this section, we have made a "sand dune" to represent the local area and planting to go on this is yet to be decided.

Another major project now completed is the reconstruction of the wooden sleeper wall which holds up the bank of planting as you head up the main drive. We hired a contractor to do this work, which he completed in one day, and made a very neat job of it.

Fortunately we have been able to call upon our local councillors, who are always great supporters of the Garden, to give us access to Ainsdale ward funds to pay for the work. We really are most grateful to them, and to Sefton Council, for this valuable help.

Our gardening Tuesday mornings are now in full swing, and anyone who would like to help is most welcome to join us. We usually garden from 10.00 am to 12.00 noon, with a very welcome coffee break in the middle of the morning.

**Jenny**



	Door	Communion	Reader	Flowers	Tea/Coffee
<b>5 April</b>	Ann Swift	Beverly Bush Imelda Aspinall	Janice Hill	Daphne Arch	Norma Naisbett
<b>12 April</b>	Morning Worship at Ainsdale Methodist Church at 10.45 am				
<b>19 April</b>	Ann Swift		Beverly Bush	Vacancy	Jenny Boulton
<b>26 April</b>	Ann Swift		Jeremy Lister	Ann Swift	Imelda Aspinall
<b>3 May</b>	Jenny Boulton	Joan Green Jenny Boulton	Wendy Parry	Daphne Arch	Hilary Musker
<b>10 May</b>	Morning Worship at Ainsdale Methodist Church at 10.45 am				
<b>17 May</b>	Jenny Boulton		Jenny Boulton	Vacancy	Norma Naisbett
<b>24 May</b>	Jenny Boulton		Imelda Aspinall	Vacancy	Jenny Boulton
<b>31 May</b>	Team Service at Formby URC at 11.00 am				



## **Great Malvern Parish Church – an act of great faith many years ago 6**

When Alan and I were away in Herefordshire recently, we visited Great Malvern, where we found this truly wonderful story of what faith can achieve, set on one of the pillars of Great Malvern Church.

“This record is made of the deed of one JOHN POPE and the villagers of Malvern who, after the dissolution of the Benedictine Monastery in the year 1539, redeemed the priory church from destruction by their faith, their boldness, their perseverance and self-sacrifice.”

“In 1541 the work of demolition by the Crown had already begun, the Lady Chapel and South Transept were taken down and lead was being removed from the main roof. Protests and petitions had been harshly repelled, and the Church seemed doomed.

Then, in that year, it is recorded that, headed by John Pope, the 200 parishioners once more appealed to the Crown to be allowed to purchase the Priory for their parish church. They offered “all they had”, namely TWENTY POUNDS, payable in two instalments. This was accepted, the Conveyance was made and the receipt given for the final instalment in the following terms:

We discharge John Pope and the other parishioners and inhabitants within the parish of Great Malvern as of part of £20, of the price of the Church and Tower, the Chancel together with the aisles and Chapels within the said Church, sold to the aforesaid John and the parishioners there and their successors, by consent of the Chancellor of the Court of Augmentations, namely of the part of the said sum being in arrear this year over and above the £10, thereof, paid this year.

Thus in 1541 did the Priory Church of St Mary and St Michael become the parish church of Great Malvern and thus did the parishioners save a glorious building from destruction, to be their heritage for ever.”

**Jenny**

# Ainsdale Village Church

**Cafe Jam Band at AVC**  
Sunday 29th March at 6 pm

**Stations of the Cross at AVC**  
Tuesday March 31st at 7.30 pm

**Maundy Thursday, April 2nd, 2 pm**  
at **Birkdale URC**  
for URC churches across Southport and Formby

**Good Friday Service**  
April 3rd, 10 am at AVC

**Easter Sunday, April 5th, 10 am at AVC**  
Communion and Easter Day Celebration  
Please bring flowers if you can,  
to dress the wooden cross  
during the service



What's on at AVC  
over Easter 2026?

There's also a  
**Sunrise Easter Sunday Service**  
with Churches Together in Ainsdale  
on the beach at 6.15 am

Are we CHILDREN OF THE RESURRECTION?

I recently came across the word 'respair.' It means 'fresh hope after despair.' Personally, I find the journey to the cross to be a mixture of so many emotions culminating in the overwhelming grief, horror, and sadness of the crucifixion on Good Friday. I understand that good to mean a holy and sacred day. But the day, the events, so dreadful are for me better named in other languages. Mourning Friday as it is called in Germany for me, seems a better name!

But then comes **EASTER SUNDAY!** Celebrating the resurrection is a time for great joy and rejoicing. So, love, joy, and hope, all words we use at Christmas, suddenly take on a new and more profound meaning. And celebration, we are so in need of that. With the anxiety and despair at what is happening in the world, for communities and even within our own churches it can become overwhelming!

Within our own church I see real hope for our future and cause for joy and celebration. We have new people joining the church, not just coming to share worship but wanting to take a more active part. God be praised! **Our Warm Welcome Café** is growing in numbers, standing room only on occasion!! We have lots of families whose children come to **Connect Youth Group** and families who come along to our **Make Lunch Club**. Not to mention our hall lettings and users. **The Rainbows** are keen to be a part of our Summer Fayre, see lower down! And are busy planning what they want to do.

We have so much potential for growing our church and witness, and I can hear many of you thinking yes, we do, but not the energy or time or enthusiasm. Because we are all getting older and are tired!! We need a vision and then a plan of action, with God's strength and guidance, to begin and continue along this path.

Our Warm Welcome Café is growing and providing so much, not just food but friendship and support when it's needed most. This is only possible because of our total reliance on Jesus, the volunteers pray every Friday, a blessing on everyone, our church and community and for specific people and situations. And of course, for each other that He will strengthen and sustain us.

We can do this every Sunday together if you would be able to get your 'heads around it!' Not just tacked on to the normal prayers within the service but maybe at the end of each service before retiring to the vestry for refreshments and maybe further discussion.

Intentional prayer and expressions of hopes together in unity,  
strengthening and encouraging each other. **And see what God can do.....**

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## **Summer Fayre 2026**

It's been a while since we had one, we haven't had the man/woman power! Paul, along with Ghostlight Performers, is organising this to raise funds for our church on **Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> June**.

The hope is that church and Ghostlight people can meet and get to know each other whilst working alongside each other, having fun, and raising money. There will be a meeting with church folk before then when details can be discussed.

### **However before then:**

**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> April**, an evening of entertainment. This is a fundraiser for Paul towards meeting the final costs of 'NOT SO STARCROSSED', his play being performed at The Epstein Theatre in Liverpool on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> June. The theatre is a very short walk from Central Station, so no problems about parking and the theatre is fabulous. See posters or ask me.

### **Café Church:**

On **Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May**, we are taking a step into new territory as we explore and offer a more contemporary, informal café style of worship for people who have expressed a desire for this. Starting at 12 midday, we will meet in the vestry initially and see how it goes, moving into the church if needed.

We will then continue to meet on the second Sunday of each month, with traditional worship continuing at the Methodist church.

Finally, **Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May, The Christian Aid BIG BREAKFAST.**

Hopefully with better weather than last year when a sudden downpour saw a mass exodus into the church!! Still a very successful event. Donations of cakes, preserves and plants most welcome.

God bless you wonderful people,

**Love, Joan**

Everyone very much enjoyed our trip to the Bijou Cinema in February to see Groundhog Day, and it was agreed that we should repeat this experience at some time in the future. In March, Claire set us a testing quiz, with 50 very varied questions, and our winner was Mary – well done to her! Our evening in April will be another visit from Peter Lyth who will be showing slides and telling us about his experiences when he and Joanne visited Thailand. Then, in May, Mary has organised a talk from a local Community Police officer, which will certainly be interesting, and should give us valuable advice about keeping safe and helping to prevent crime in the local area.

These Ladies Group evenings are available to everyone (including men!) We always have a very sociable time, ending up with some tasty supper, so please put the dates (in the Calendars in this magazine) in your diary and come along.

**Jenny**



**Wishing everyone a very happy**

**EASTER**



A Service at AVC  
Tues 31st March  
at 7.30pm

Focusing on the biblical narrative of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus.

All are welcome

Please join us as we reflect on the significance of the events leading to Christ's death and resurrection and his redeeming love for the world.

# Stations of the Cross

Ainsdale Village Church

## **Notes from the Archives – Part 20: The Church in the Post War years, 12 1945 to 1960**

I have selected what I hope are items of interest from over 140 handwritten pages of minutes for the 15 year period

In the post war years, church membership hovered around 70 adults, plus young people and children. They participated in a variety of activities. In addition to morning and evening services on a Sunday, they had Junior Church, Young People's Fellowship, Youth Club, Pilots, Women's Guild, Men's Meeting, Bible Study and a Badminton Club. They also had delegates to various church councils and outside organisations such as the London Missionary Society. We need to remember that, at that time, the church had the benefit of its own full time minister, which was a great advantage in facilitating all these activities.

They averaged 35 children attending Sunday School, with many taking the Scripture Exam. (In my Methodist Church in Walton, my Sunday School teacher, Mr Stephens, gradually gave away his extensive stamp collection as an incentive to attend!) The anniversaries of both the church and the Sunday School were recognized every year with special services. I noticed that they used the abbreviation Xmas throughout the minutes, penned by many different hands!

They held an annual Christmas Fair and Summer Garden Party with a Rose Queen, who would parade down Station Road with her entourage, and accompanied by a band. This event continued until the 1980s, when our own children took part. I think we can say that, as now, the church was at the centre of village life.

The after effects of the war continued, with the Church receiving £690 from the War Damage Restoration Fund to replace the windows blown in during the bombing, and which had been patched up on an ad hoc basis.

In 1947 Rev William Paxton was presented with a new bicycle and a £50 salary increase. In 1948 the church received a legacy of £1000 from a local (non-church) resident. In the same year the church adopted the recommendation of the Congregational Church of England and Wales to treat the ordination of men and women on equal terms.

In 1950 Gavin Henderson, Barbara's father, was appointed Secretary, a 13 post he held until 1960. Rev Paxton moved to a church in Sunderland, and was replaced by Rev David Harries who joined straight from completing his training at the Lancashire College. In 1954 the coal fired boiler was replaced with a gas boiler at a cost of £177, and a weather vane was fitted to the west end of the roof. When I was Church Secretary in the late 1970s, I remember reporting the loss of the weather vane in a strong gale! It was not replaced.

For 70 members it was agreed that ten Deacons was unnecessary and unwieldy, and that one Deacon to every ten members was appropriate, with four men and three women. In late 1954 Rev Harries moved to a church in Llanely, and Rev William Lines came to Ainsdale from Leyland. At this time the Deacons decided that the present manse at 51 Segars Lane, purchased in 1945 for £1254, was not up to standard and was sold for £1700. Number 15 Limont Road was then purchased for £2350, with a mortgage for the difference.

**Alan**



## Calendar for April

- Thurs 2<sup>nd</sup>** Maundy Thursday service at Birkdale URC at 2.00 pm
- Fri 3<sup>rd</sup>** Good Friday service at 10.00 am at AVC- 10.00 am
- Sun 5<sup>th</sup>** Sunrise Service on the beach at 6.15 am
- Sun 5<sup>th</sup>** Easter Sunday Holy Communion at 10.00 am –  
Hilary Smith
- Tue 7<sup>th</sup>** Deacons' Meeting in the vestry at 7.30 pm
- Sun 12<sup>th</sup>** Morning Worship at Ainsdale Methodist Church  
at 10.45 am
- Mon 13<sup>th</sup>** Ladies Group at 7.00 pm in the vestry when Peter Lyth will  
show slides of his holiday in Thailand.
- Sat 18<sup>th</sup>** An Evening of Entertainment –  
see item in Joan's letter in the magazine.
- Sun 19<sup>th</sup>** Morning Worship at 10.00 am – Janice Atfield
- Sun 26<sup>th</sup>** Morning Worship at 10.00 am – Janice Hill
- Tues 28<sup>th</sup>** Prayer in the church from 11.00 am



## Calendar for May 2025

- Sun 3<sup>rd</sup>** Holy Communion at 10.00 am – Nigel Mawdsley
- Sun 10<sup>th</sup>** Morning Worship at Ainsdale Methodist Church at 10.45 am
- Sun 10<sup>th</sup>** Café Church in the Vestry at 12.00 noon – see item in Joan’s letter in the magazine.
- Mon 8<sup>th</sup>** Ladies Group in the vestry at 7.00 pm – please see item in magazine
- Tue 12<sup>th</sup>** Deacon’s meeting in the vestry at 7.30 pm - TBC
- Sat 16<sup>th</sup>** Christian Aid BIG Breakfast – see item in magazine
- Sun 17<sup>th</sup>** Morning Worship at 10.00 am – Church led
- Sun 24<sup>th</sup>** Morning Worship at 10.00 am – Hilary Smith
- Tues 26<sup>th</sup>** Prayer in the church from 11.00 am
- Sun 31<sup>st</sup>** Team Service at Formby URC at 11.00 am



# Good Friday Service

## April 3rd, 10 am at AVC

There is a green hill far away,  
outside a city wall,  
where the dear Lord was crucified,  
who died to save us all.

We may not know, we cannot tell  
what pains He had to bear,  
but we believe it was for us  
He hung and suffered there.  
He died that we might be forgiven,  
He died to make us good, that  
we might go at last to heaven,  
saved by His precious blood.

Writer Author: Cecil Frances Alexander (1848)

All Welcome