

**The Messenger**  
**Ainsdale Village Church**  
**United Reformed/Baptist**  
Station Road, Ainsdale, PR8 3HW  
**June/July 2026**

The day is yours, and yours also the night;  
you established the sun and moon.  
It was you who set all the boundaries of the earth;  
you made both summer and winter.

**Psalm 74, verses 16 and 17**



**Minister:**            **Rev. Hilary Smith**            Tel: 01704 792235

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**Dear friends,**

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In a fit of self-indulgence recently I went to the cinema to see “The Magic Faraway Tree”, and initially I was surprised that, considering it is a film for children, there were many older people there – until I remembered that I am also an older person, and, like me, the others watching were searching for a lost childhood that they didn’t even know felt lost.

When I was a child I spent many happy hours reading Enid Blyton books, and my regret at binning my Famous Five books 40 years ago was partly mitigated by my buying them again recently, and enjoying them once more, about 50 years after I originally read them.

Maybe it’s having grandchildren that has reminded me of the joy of childhood, as I notice them laughing at the small and insignificant things of life – the rocking of a swing, a dog running past, the splashing of water in the swimming pool, and I wonder, when did I forget to find that kind of joy in those everyday things? When and why did life become so serious, and responsible, and worrying?

There probably wasn’t a particular time, just a general sliding away from the joy of childhood- so, having recognised it, I’m going to make a determined effort to be child-like again, to laugh more, to find the pleasure in the daily gift of life and creation, and feel anew that sense of innocence and wonder.

At a recent baptism service, I read from Luke’s gospel: Jesus called the children to him and said, ‘let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it’ – and for the first time I realised how important it is to keep alive that sense of trust and acceptance that we have if we have been blessed with a happy childhood.

I’m sure we are all embracing the arrival of summer and the warmer weather, so let’s go out and enjoy the richness of nature, because that will help us keep in perspective the troubled world and all its conflicts, cruelty, indifference and sorrow. Every day is a gift, and to look at it through the eyes of a child is to fulfil Christ’s call to us to receive the kingdom of God with hope and trust.

*Yours in the service of our Lord,*

**Hilary**

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**Church Secretary**  
Mrs Imelda Aspinall  
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**Church Treasurer:**  
Mrs Wendy Parry  
Tel: 01704 578214

**Deacons:**  
Imelda Aspinall  
Joan Green  
Lucinda Green

Christine Holford  
Wendy Parry  
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

## Ken Parkinson

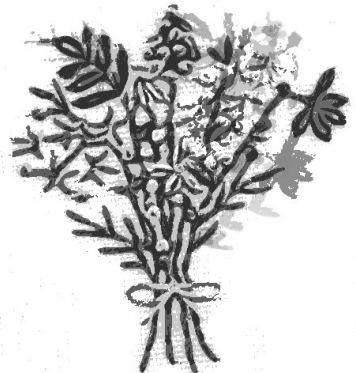
Many people in the church will remember Ken and Jenny Parkinson, who lived in Station Road and became members of our church fellowship. They became friends of Pat and Peter Sutcliffe, and contributed to church life while they lived in Ainsdale. In particular, Ken offered to become the project manager when the Church Meeting voted to have the vestry and main kitchen redeveloped. This was a major project and we were blessed to have him take on this work.

Ken and Jenny moved down to Dorset in 2016 and we have recently had news from another of our previous members, Alison Hayhurst, that Ken sadly died on 22<sup>nd</sup> May after a long illness. We send our thoughts and prayers to Jenny Parkinson and give thanks for their time with us at Ainsdale Village Church.

## Flowers in church

There are vacancies on the flower list for **Sunday 21 June and Sunday 26 July**. If anyone can help on these dates, please let me know.

**Many thanks,**



June and July is a really busy time in the Garden.

On 19<sup>th</sup> May, we held a Plant Sale to raise funds, and although the weather was mixed, the stall raised a magnificent amount of £330.

There are still some plants left, so these will be used at the Church Summer Fayre on 6 June. Many thanks to all who helped.

We are in the process of planting up the new dry garden area at the bottom of the garden and deciding on its final structure.

The weeds seem to have taken over at the moment in all the different beds, but our expert and hardworking gardeners will no doubt be up to the task! The tulips have now finished, sadly, but they did provide a stunning display, and now instead we have beautiful bright red poppies.

The new troughs, skillfully made by Frank Hanley, are being filled, and great help with this has been given by students from Merefield School, along with one of their Teaching Assistants.

Many thanks for their sterling assistance.

### Jenny



# SUNDAY ROTAS

	<b>Door</b>	<b>Communion</b>	<b>Reader</b>	<b>Flowers</b>	<b>Tea/ Coffee</b>
<b>7 June</b>	Wendy Parry	Jeremy Lister Wendy Parry	Jeremy Lister	Dorothy Binks	Jenny Boulton
<b>14 June</b>	Morning Worship at Ainsdale Methodist Church – 10.45 am				
<b>21 June</b>	Wendy Parry		Beverly Bush	Vacancy	Joan Green
<b>28 June</b>	Wendy Parry		Janice Hill	Stella Tomlinson	Norma Naisbett
<b>5 July</b>	Service in the Tent on the Village Green				
<b>12 July</b>	Morning Worship at Ainsdale Methodist Church – 10.45 am				
<b>19 July</b>	Jean Harding		Imelda Aspinall	Stella Tomlinson	Imelda Aspinall
<b>26 July</b>	Jean Harding		Jenny Boulton	Vacancy	Hilary Musker

## Danny Doyle

Most people will remember Danny and Louise Doyle, who had their wedding at our church and then joined in our fellowship. Danny became our treasurer, and did a sterling job for a good few years before handing over to Wendy, who is doing an equally excellent job!

Danny works for Sefton Council and has recently had a promotion, to become Assistant Revenues Manager, overseeing Business Rates, Council Tax, Income and Sundry Debt departments for the Council.

**Many congratulations to Danny from all of us.**

At our last Impact Youth Group, the question of the week was, "What do you think might lead someone to believe in God or a higher being?"

Now, this was an evening with fewer than usual young people, I won't go into the reason why!! Suffice it to say with enough leaders the ones there were attentive and responsive. With answers ranging from near death experiences to how the world came into being we had some good small group discussions.

This reminded me of our first Café Church a couple of weeks before, where amongst our worship we had our own question of the day. Regardless of age or generation we can all listen to each other's thoughts and wonder at the insight, sometimes from the most unexpected sources!!

What is vital though is leadership firmly grounded in the Bible and teachings of Jesus, and prayer to keep us on the 'right path.'

With hopes of extending invitations to Café Church to Café folk, Connect Youth Group families along with Make Lunch families, prayer is paramount.

Yours and ours, for our reaching out with the strength and guidance of the Holy Spirit to those as yet unaware of the good news of the love and peace found in learning about and eventually becoming a follower of Jesus Christ.

### THANK YOU AGAIN!

This time for the support for our Churches Together Christian Aid Big Breakfast when we raised a massive £440 36p. Also, for donations received via the envelopes - there are still some in the vestry for anyone still wishing to donate.

Churches Together again, we had a wonderful Pentecost Service in the garden, making the most of the glorious weather. Led by Rev Hilary, Rev Jackie and Fr Paul and his guitar, with 50 or more people, it was a truly ecumenical occasion and a great witness to the local community.

Love and God bless,

Joan

## Ladies Group

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In May we had a change of plan, and enjoyed a Beetle Drive in the vestry. Chaos reigned as, in order to balance the numbers, we had two robot players, Bob and Fred, operated by whoever was sitting at the appropriate table. Fortunately neither of them won – Claire was our worthy winner.

On Monday 8 June, Mary has organised a speaker from Hesketh Park Heritage, and we would really appreciate it if a decent number of people could attend to hear this interesting talk.

Remember, everyone is welcome!

Then in July, we continue our Hesketh Park connection with a tour of the Kitchen Garden at the park, run by Bridge Inn Community Farm.

Further details will be available later.

**Jenny**

## An Invitation for us all

Peter and Jo Lyth are holding an “Open House” on

**Thursday 4 June, from 10.00 am to 12.00 noon  
and then from 2.00 – 4.00 pm.**

Address: **15 Mallee Crescent, Churchtown, Southport, PR9 8NJ.**

Tea, coffee and cakes will be available, and there will be a raffle in aid of Queenscourt Hospice.

It would be really good if as many Ainsdale people as possible could attend this event.



I have been asked by one or two people if I would write something about my 'life' for the Messenger, which I do with some reluctance. My story really begins with learning German at Wigan Grammar School with one of the best teachers I have ever met. Not only did he interest me in the language but also in the culture and beauty of this country and these have always appealed to me. Like most students I was given a penfriend. We recently celebrated sixty years of friendship not only with him but also with his wider family, and his Mum was very much my 'German Granny'.

When I decided to become an Art Teacher I went to York purely by chance and discovered it was twinned with the German city of Munster. Not only that but each Year they exchanged one student with one from Germany, and in my Year I was the one they most wanted to get rid of! Munster was amazing and more than that, as a 'guest' of the University I was invited to so many wonderful Events.

On my first day – a Friday - I walked into the University and a young lady came up to me, introduced herself, and asked if I would like to spend the weekend with her family. Not having anything better to do I agreed, and the following morning we set off to meet her family in a beautiful village about forty miles away. Her family took me under their wing and looked after me wonderfully the whole of my time at University, and Gunda and I are still friends sixty years later.

When we had been teaching for a while we both started to do penfriends and then some while later one of us had the idea to exchange pupils' work. The response from the children was amazing in terms of motivation, etc, and over the years we gradually expanded the network to include other schools and other countries.

In the early Nineties I received a letter from the European Union to ask if I might like to be involved in setting up a new Programme to be called '*Comenius*' to bring together schools, teachers, parents, and communities from every country in Europe. My response – 'My life has just been ruined' and so my school became the 'pilot' school for the UK. Briefly, each Partnership would last for three years and involve between three and eight schools from different countries. There would be a Theme to each Project, but also schools would be encouraged to share their own customs and cultures. The £23,000 each school would receive would pay for a couple of visits a year to discuss progress, etc and to give teachers the opportunity to meet with their counterparts. We eventually had many millions taking part from every country, except very, very few from the UK. As Wigan Council said to me, '*Well actually, in Wigan we don't do Europe!*' – a very sad and familiar story!

At my school towards the turn of the century we got the 'Headteacher from Hell',

who totally wrecked the school and so I - along with almost everyone else – left. I then went off to Europe full- time making over 400 Trips to every corner of the EU, becoming one of the Programme Leaders, meeting thousands of people, not a single one of whom I would not call my friend whether they were Presidents of countries or ordinary people like you and me.

I was part of the ‘Peace Process’ in Ireland, and even here I only met people who just wanted to live at peace with everyone else, however much they had suffered during the ‘Troubles’.

I have also visited every Denomination of church there is and always been warmly welcomed, taking part in many Services in countries all across Europe. Eventually I became an ‘Ambassador’ of the European Union representing the EU at Events all over Europe. This led to me becoming very involved with ‘Holocaust Memorial’ because I was often taken to the Death Camps, etc to lay a wreath and to meet so many who had suffered. I now organise and lead the people of Wigan and Leigh in their Memorial at the end of January and in fact suffer from PTSD because of all I have witnessed.

Of all the thousands of people I have met, not one would I not wish to call my friend as we all share the same wish to live at peace with everyone else, sharing what we have with others and receiving the same from them. Those who want to wage war or sow hate are a tiny minority, who unfortunately get the headlines.

Walk out of church on a Sunday morning, talk to the first person you meet and I would guarantee that after a few minutes you would be happy to call them your friend, just as Janet and I were so welcomed into Ainsdale Village Church. Hope not Hate, Friendship instead of Enmity - this is everything that all of us across the world are wanting.

As it says in the ‘Great Commandment’

*“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”.*

Something, which started in my schooldays, has given me the most amazing life – we never know where He will lead us!

**Keith**



# SUMMER FAYRE

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**Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> June 10am - 1pm**

Donations of plants, cakes and preserves, books, and bric-a-brac would be most appreciated and can be dropped off on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> between 9.30am - 1pm or 5-6pm. Also, the Saturday morning from 8.30am.

There is a list in the vestry for anyone who can to make 6 bars, wrapped and labelled.

As we learnt from the CA Big Breakfast, donations from local businesses, including the Co-op

are not what they have been previously!

So, we are going to have to buy everything for the BBQ and take out expenses. As this is our major fundraiser for the church this year, if you are unable to help in any other way and if you can, then any monetary donations towards costs would be really appreciated.

We do not need any help in organisation or setting up and clearing away, as Ghostlight Performers under Paul's leadership have done and are doing this.

Hoping for lots of support and if you wish to help on a stall or anything else just let me know.

Thank you in advance of anything you can do.

**Joan**



# SUMMER FAYRE

*Fun for all the family!*



**BOOK  
STALL**



**CAKES  
& JAM**



**BRIC  
A BRAC**



**ENTERTAINMENT**



**HOOK  
A DUCK**



**BBQ  
TEA &  
COFFEE**

**6<sup>TH</sup> JUNE**

**10 am - 1 pm**



**Ainsdale Village Church**

### **The Church in the Post War years, 1945-1960 continued**

By 1956 the Drama Group was well established, putting on a play each year over four evenings. In that year the lovely rose window in the gable end was presented to the church as a gift from a gentleman, in memory of his late wife who had worshipped here for many years.

In planning the Christmas Fair for 1956, the Deacons decreed that there would not be a Father Christmas, as in previous years he had not been profitable! Occasionally disagreements arise in church life and one such incident is recorded whereby the Deacons gave permission for a young member to practice on the organ. Mr Jones, the organist, strongly disagreed, and threatened to resign. The church meeting supported the Deacons and Mr Jones duly resigned! A new organist was found within two months.

In 1958 the Deacons obtained photographs from some previous ministers, plus photos of themselves and others, and put them in a folder "for posterity". I wonder what happened to it, because it is not in the historical records on the shelves in the upper room. In that year, the Deacons decreed that raffles were banned in the church. It was reported that urgent work was required on the hall roof which was leaking badly.

A leaking roof continued to be a problem on and off for many years, until it was finally fixed in 2012 when Peter Brook fitted a new roof.

The silver trowel used by Alderman Boothroyd in 1878 when the Foundation Stone was laid, was presented to the church by his family.

It is on the back wall in the sanctuary in its glass-fronted box. Mr Boothroyd was the founder of the Southport department store Broadbents and Boothroyds.

The church grounds were in need of improvement, so Horticultural Services Ltd were employed to provide regular maintenance. Rev Lines organised certain clergy in Southport to provide a Sunday service once a fortnight to churches currently without a minister.

In 1960 Pilots was restarted when a new leader was found.

The Drama Group performances had become so popular that the Deacons agreed to purchase fifty more stacking chairs. The Deacons discussed the need to get the Young People's Fellowship more involved in the important work of the church. Six YPF members were attending Membership Preparation Classes, including our very own Pauline Haigh (nee Rimmer) who told me how the young people were a thriving and important part of church life. At this time they reviewed the membership list, and moved 15 people to the Suspense List for non-attendance, resulting in a more realistic membership of 55.

It was agreed that the Secretary and a Deacon would represent the church at the Southport Christian Council of Churches.

The main kitchen was obviously too small because it was decided to extend it by eight feet. Three Southport builders declined to quote, so they turned to church member and local builder Stuart Howard to do the job for £200, including a new roof. The Drama Group contributed towards the cost. For an extra £10, the escape hatch in the outer wall of the upper room was created, with a rope to facilitate escape!

Next time, on to the 1960s and beyond.



## Calendar for June

- Mon 1<sup>st</sup>** Bible Study at the home of Hilary Smith, at 10.30 am
- Thu 4<sup>th</sup>** Open House at Peter Lyth's home  
– see item in magazine
- Sat 6<sup>th</sup>** Summer Fayre organised by Ghostlight Performers  
– see item in magazine
- Sun 7<sup>th</sup>** Holy Communion at 10.00 am – Janice Hill
- Mon 8<sup>th</sup>** Ladies Group Trip to Hesketh Park Heritage Garden  
– see item in magazine
- Sun 14<sup>th</sup>** Morning Worship at Ainsdale Methodist Church  
at 10.45 am
- Sun 14<sup>th</sup>** Café Church in the vestry at 11 am
- Sun 21<sup>st</sup>** Morning Worship at 10.00 am – Peter Lyth
- Sun 28<sup>th</sup>** Morning Worship at 10.00 am – Hilary Smith
- Tue 30<sup>th</sup>** Prayer in the church from 11.00 am



## Calendar for July

- Sun 5<sup>th</sup>** Morning Worship at 10.00 am in the tent on the Village Green – Fr Paul from Heartstone will take the service
- Mon 6<sup>th</sup>** Bible Study at the home of Hilary Smith,  
at 10.30 am
- Sun 12<sup>th</sup>** Morning Worship at Ainsdale Methodist Church  
– 10.45 am
- Sun 12<sup>th</sup>** Café Church at 11 am at Ainsdale Village Church
- Mon 13<sup>th</sup>** Ladies Group – Visit to Hesketh Park Kitchen Garden –  
see item in magazine
- Sun 19<sup>th</sup>** Morning Worship at 10.00 am – Nigel Mawdsley
- Sun 26<sup>th</sup>** Morning Worship at 10.00 am – Church-led Service
- Sun 26<sup>th</sup>** A retirement service at Ainsdale Methodist Church for  
Patrick Evans – 4.00 pm
- Tue 28<sup>th</sup>** Prayer in the church from 11.00 am



We celebrated Pentecost on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> May, and the Churches Together in Ainsdale Service took place in our Ainsdale Community Garden at Ainsdale Village Church. It was well attended by folk from all the various churches, and we were blessed with a glorious sunny day to enjoy our worship in the open air, with chairs arranged in a circle around the bird bath. (For some reason, I always think of this as a font.)

The community garden was full of colour, with flowers in full bloom and the bluest sky. Red balloons and service sheets were handed out, and people chatted in readiness for the service to start. The dogs who accompanied their owners to the service were offered water to quench their thirst in the heat.

The service was led by Rev Hilary Smith, Rev Jackie Vasquez and Father Paul who accompanied us on guitar as we sang the various hymns.

We were lucky to have a person in our midst who was able to say a prayer in Turkish. Rev. Hilary said a prayer in French and Rev Jackie also offered one in 'Scouse'.

There was a great sense of the Holy Spirit there amongst us that afternoon as we shared our worship together across the different churches and we also moved around to greet each other to share the Peace of God.

It was good to hear the hymns echo out across the village, enticing folk to come into the garden, and if not to join us, to sit on the benches amongst the garden arches and enjoy the atmosphere.

Many of us agreed later, as we shuffled the chairs back into the church, that during the summer season it would be great to have more services in the open air, even if it's decided spontaneously, as we arrive at church to find that the weather is warm.

The new café church that is just starting at AVC once a month on the second Sunday, plans to set up tables and chairs outside on sunny Sundays.

It's great for us to worship openly, sharing our love for Jesus Christ and as the garden is enjoyed by so many folk in the village, we hope it will encourage more to join us.

We have a prayer box in the garden where people can post their prayers, and we pray for them during the Prayer group meetings on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month.

Many people say that they find the community garden a place of solace and peace.

**All are welcome in this place. Thanks be to God for all His Love!**

**Bev**