

The Messenger

Ainsdale Village Church

United Reformed/Baptist

Station Road, Ainsdale, PR8 3HW

June/July 2025

From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets,
the name of the Lord is to be praised.

Psalm 118:24



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

hilary.bell@yahoo.com

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/ainsdalevillagechurch>

Website: www.ainsdalevillagechurch.com

Dear friends,

I recently met up with an old university friend who I hadn't seen for 39 years, as he moved to Germany just after the last time I saw him and so has now lived in Germany for much longer than he lived in England. It was good to see him again, and to reflect on how much has changed - and how much hasn't.

Back in the 1980s we both knew each other's parents, were part of the same friendship group in our late teens, and are now both parents in our turn, as the wheels of time have ground slowly on, and life has kept going forward – at an ever-faster pace. There are bonds in the length of time that we have known each other, even after many years of little or no communication. Steve looked different to how I remembered him, which is hardly surprising after all that time, but he had exactly the same mannerisms – same sentence structure, exposition of facts, and booming laugh, which meant that if I'd been in the same room as him without knowing it was him, I would still have recognised him.

In the Easter story I've always been interested in the accounts of the disciples both recognising and not quite recognising the risen Christ. The appearance in the locked room, on the road to Emmaus and on the sea shore, all speak of the joy and delight at the reunion with a lost friend, one who had shared so much with them but who is now both familiar and strange, as if the experience has done more for him than for them; as if another dimension has been at play – which of course it has.

We know that people who travel in space age differently to those who remain subject to earth's gravity, and we don't have to go all the way up to space to appreciate the new perspective that we have when we "rise above" the earth. I remember one plane trip, coming in to land at Manchester on a dark Bonfire night evening, and flying over the Wirral where I noticed little tiny but very pretty explosions of light as people let off fireworks, that no doubt looked spectacular to them but looked very small fry to me!

From there it's only a short leap to an understanding that the Kingdom of Heaven has different rules to those of the earth, and that Jesus can be with us whenever we call on him. Perspective is very important, and our amazing God is master of all time and space, which is of great comfort when we feel that it's all getting too much.

I pray that the risen Christ is meeting with you again, and that you recognise him when he does; and even more, that we will all make a point of seeking him as we look for signs of light, warmth and renewal in the gift of summer that is with us just now.

Yours in the service of our Lord,

Hilary

Minister:

Rev. Hilary Smith

Tel: 01704 792235

Church Secretary

Mrs Imelda Aspinall

Tel: 07955 874814

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



Ainsdale Village Singers

Summer Concert on Saturday 12 July at 7.30 pm

As the choir now has so many members, we can sadly no longer stage our concerts in Ainsdale Village Church. The summer concert will be at Liverpool Road Methodist Church (the Red Chapel) in Birkdale.

It will be a larger event than usual, as our Choirmaster, Stewart Hankinson, intends to bring his other choir, who are based in Warton, to join us.

We will then be doing the concert again in Lytham Methodist Church on the following Saturday, 19th July at 7.30 pm, when we will be the guests of the Warton choir.

If you would like tickets, please ask me!

Jenny

Organ recital Lord Street West United Church

Monday 7th July at 2.30

**Rev. Peter Hughes will be playing the organ and
there will be a retiring collection to help with the
building refurbishment.**

Refreshments will be served.

All are welcome

Hours of Use of our buildings

For legal reasons on a monthly basis I record the number of hours our buildings are used for church activities, and the hours used by outside organisations renting the halls. The hall lettings form issued by Bev each month shows the regular church and hiring activities.

However, church people carry out numerous additional activities. I therefore request that such visits are recorded in the notebook which is on the sideboard in the vestry. This has been running for several weeks, so there are lots of activities already recorded.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Alan



Songs of Praise at AVC

Every few months, we have a songs of praise service led by Church Members. Bev and I put the services together using suggestions for Bible Readings, prayers and reflections. We assemble the whole thing on the last Tuesday of the month.

If you have a favourite Hymn, Christian Song, Prayers or Bible reading you would like included in the next Songs of Praise service, please contact me or Bev. If you would like to take part then please let us know.

Thanks - Janice and Bev

Notes from the Archives – Part 16: 1908 and 1909

We continue with extracts from the minutes of the monthly church meetings, which covered the years from 1900 to 1911. There is no mention of Deacons' Meetings in any of the records.

1908: Agreed that the Deacons enter upon a Contract with Singer Lee and Company to erect an iron building at the rear of the church, at a cost of not more than £200. Also agreed that the new building be named the Milton Hall to commemorate the 300th year of John Milton's birth. It was also agreed to form a committee to control the hire of the new building.

When Jen and I became members in 1972, the Large Hall was known as the Milton Hall, but we had no idea why, and no-one else did either, but now we know. Best known for his epic poem Paradise Lost, John Milton (1608 – 1694) was a poet and theologian. The poem retells the story of the creation from the Book of Genesis.

The iron building was purchased in kit form, known as a "Tin Tabernacle", and was erected by a local builder. These were popular with non-conformist churches and there are many examples around the country. There are modest foundations to our hall, but it is still here after 117 years, and giving faithful service to the church and local community. It has, of course, had a lot of TLC over recent years!

The following six extracts are from 1909:

The Women's Guild of Christian Service is mentioned, and it was still operating in 2007, a hundred years later.

"A discussion took place on the sparseness of the congregation at the morning service, so a special effort is required by the members".

"Mr Yates made a strong appeal for a better attendance at the Saturday night prayer meeting".

"It was agreed that an overdraft of £40 be obtained from the District Bank to pay for the new piano, and the old piano to be sold".

The congregation supported exchange visits of English clergy to Berlin in 1908, and a return visit of German clergy to London in 1909. "The purpose was to develop goodwill and friendship, and the earnest desire of peace between the two nations".

"The Congregational Union of England and Wales appealed to churches to raise a fund to secure a minimum stipend of £120 per annum for ministers. The Secretary was instructed to reply that when the burden of debt on the Milton Hall (our Large Hall) was removed from our shoulders, we would give the matter our healthy support".

To be continued.....

God's Garden

Over recent months, it has been a pleasure to have Sheila Mace worshipping with us, and she told me this little story, which I have her permission to put in The Messenger.

Sheila has a granddaughter called Chloe, and when Chloe was a baby, Sheila put in many hours of childminding, as all of us who are grandparents can appreciate! She used to wheel the baby in the pram around the Community Garden paths, and have a sit on the benches while the baby slept.

As Chloe grew into a toddler, Sheila brought her many times to the garden, and one day when Chloe had learned to talk, she asked Sheila, "Please can we go to God's garden?" Sheila was delighted to realise that, by this, Chloe meant our very own Community Garden! Since then, Chloe has grown up into an able student and is currently taking her GCSEs. We wish her all the luck in the world for her future, and hope that she and Sheila will continue visiting "God's Garden" in the years to come.

Jenny

Sunday Rotas

	Door	Communion	Reader	Flowers	Tea/Coffee
1st June	Wendy Parry	Jeremy Lister Beverly Bush	Imelda Aspinall	Suzette Gorman	Imelda Aspinall
8th June	Service at Ainsdale Methodist Church at 10.45 am				
15th June	Wendy Parry		Jenny Boulton	Daphne Arch	Jenny Boulton
22nd June	Wendy Parry		Jenny Boulton	Stella Tomlinson	Joan Green
29th June	Team Service at Lord St West – Moderator Tim Meadows				
6th July	Service in the tent on the Village Green – 10.30 am				
13th July	Service at Ainsdale Methodist Church at 10.45 am				
20th July	Jenny Boulton		Beverly Bush	Daphne Arch	Norma Naisbett
27th July	Jenny Boulton	TBC if Communion	Imelda Aspinall	Vacancy	Imelda Aspinall

Bible Sales on the rise

Apparently, according to a recent newspaper article, sales of the Bible have risen, despite a decline of interest in organised religion. It seems that Generation Z, those born from the late 1990s to the 2010s, are becoming more spiritual and looking at various sources, including the Bible.

There was an 87 per cent increase in sales between 2019 and 2024, according to SPCK Group, a Christian publishing company. It seems that we are at the centre of a significant cultural shift regarding matters of faith and religion, and atheism, once considered by modern society to be the view of most rational adults, no longer carries the same weight or appeal. Generation Z in particular are statistically far less likely to identify as atheists than their parents.

In January a survey found that 25% of Generation X, people born between 1965 and 1980 identified as atheist, making it the least religious generation. Atheism falls to 20% among millennials, born between 1981 and 1996, dropping to just 13% among Generation Z, born between 1997 and 2012.

The Bible Society says that some of the increased sales have come from young people buying the Bible themselves, parents buying it for their children and churches buying it for their youth groups.

The Good News Bible – The Youth Edition (2018) is the most popular edition, with sales having almost doubled since 2021. It contains explanations to help readers understand important Bible passages.



Community Garden

This has been a busy time for the gardeners. As well as having to water a lot (only with cans, not the hose), we had a plant and preserves sale on Tuesday 20th May. As always, Anne Hanley and others had worked hard to ensure there were plenty of plants available, and the proceeds came to a whopping £403! A magnificent result. It was agreed that a donation of £50 would be given to Christian Aid from this amount.

We were also given donations from Iris Whitaker, who donates the profits from her books about the history of Ainsdale, and from Ainsdale Women's Institute. It is really good for the gardeners to know that local people love the garden and are willing give it their financial support.

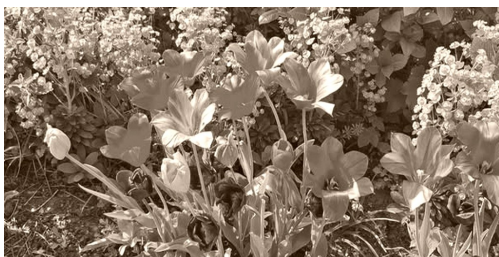
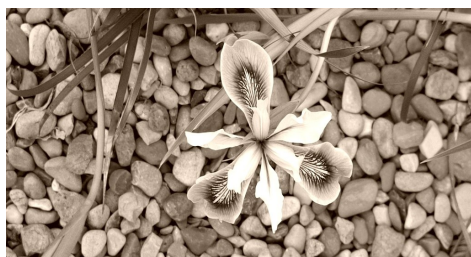
Also, at the plant sale, £88 was raised for Church funds from the provision of refreshments in the garden.

On Saturday 12th and Sunday 13th July, Ainsdale Civic Society will be hosting their annual Open Gardens Event, and the Community Garden will be officially open for visitors on the Saturday from 10.00 am – 4.00 pm.

There will be another plant sale, and refreshments for visitors.

Following this, on Tuesday 15th July, the gardeners will be hosting a Thank You Coffee Morning in the garden (hopefully) for those people who had opened their gardens the previous weekend. This will run alongside the usual Church Coffee Morning, but the gardeners will provide the refreshments and do the work!

Jenny



Ladies Group

The Ladies Group continues to thrive, thanks in part to the very welcome addition of our wonderful group of gardening ladies. In April, we met for a delayed planning evening to decide what treats would be in store for the rest of the year, and we came up with some great ideas.

In May, Mary organised for us all (including three honorary ladies – Ian, Alan and David) to visit the Merseyside Recycling Development Centre at Gilmoor in Liverpool. We had a fascinating afternoon where we found out about all the items which we were wrongly putting in our recycling bins, but the good news is that next March there will be a national scheme in place which will ensure that nothing goes in the wrong bin!!

We saw how the waste from the recycling bins is brought into the centre and sent up and down various chutes to be separated out, and learned where it is all taken to be dealt with by different facilities up and down the country. Bin Bin, the recycling elephant, features in the photograph along with the rest of us.

Our June meeting will be a walk around Ainsdale followed by a picnic in the garden if the weather allows. In July there is a change to our schedule, as our Chinese meal has been postponed until August. Claire will be hosting a brain-teasing quiz for us in July.

Jenny



The Letter – Jenny Boulton

Small changes can make a huge difference. This has become apparent to me many times over my years of being a householder – you struggle along with some household item or building inadequacy for years, until you suddenly think, “Why am I putting up with this?”

Then you decide to make the change, and oh what a difference! We recently replaced our patio doors (a legacy of the 70s) with windows and a central opening door, and my life is transformed, especially as I am only a small thing myself. I can now open the door and step into the garden without getting out the footstool and fighting with the top and bottom locks!

I think this also applies to our church life. Over the years, large and small changes have been made at Ainsdale Village Church, and you only have to look at the whole site to see the enormous and enhancing effect these have had.

We can also try to make small changes in our everyday communications with our families, friends and neighbours – let them know more often how much we appreciate them and what a difference they make to our life. In the words of Elton John, “how wonderful life is while you’re in the world”.

A hymn from my childhood encapsulates how we could change the world if only everyone acted on it:

*Jesus bids us shine,
With a clear, pure light,
Like a little candle burning in the night;
In this world of darkness, so we must shine,
You in your small corner,
And I in mine.*



THOUGHTS AND INSPIRATIONS

As we head towards half-term may I update you on some of the mission and outreach, not to mention service, happening now within our church and community, not the specific events but the regular week to week.

The purpose of God's church is not to build church buildings.

As Paul says, it's to form one body where all the members belong to each other and work together to see God's kingdom come. Yes, I know buildings and the upkeep are important, our weather doesn't really allow for regular worship in the open air or tents! What is just as important though is what goes on inside them and by the followers of Jesus who use them.

At Impact this week we asked our young people to think of how they can help and encourage Year 6's who will be moving up to High School. They really engaged and wrote some great postcards that Tabz can give out in the junior schools reassuring them and giving good advice.

Connect Youth Group, our Year 6's, will benefit from this. This week we are fortunate to have Anne and Mary from 'the gardeners' coming to build a '**Bug Hotel**,' we will talk about the importance of looking after pollinators, vital to God's creation. Both groups finish for a week, instead we have **Make Lunch** when we welcome families who struggle to 'make ends meet' or are suffering from isolation. Then on every Friday we have our **Warm Welcome Café**, a free café for those who can't afford café prices and a great welcoming friendly place for anyone lonely who finds true friendship.

All of these are staffed by volunteers and prayer is the mainstay of all of them, both personal and those shared as in the café when everyone is prayed for. Volunteers are the core of all that we do to further God's kingdom here on earth. Led of course by our ministers.

Just received from TLG, ahead of our Lunch Club this week, Inspired by **Colossians 1:9-12**, from The Message Bible:

'Be assured that from the first day we heard of you, we haven't stopped praying for you, asking God to give you wise minds and spirits attuned to his will, and so acquire a thorough understanding of the ways in which God works. We pray that you'll live well for the Master, making him proud of you as you work hard in his orchard. As you learn more and more how God works, you will learn how to do your work. We pray that you'll have the strength to stick it out over the long haul-not the grim strength of gritting your teeth, but the glory-strength God gives. It is strength that endures the unendurable and spills over into joy, thanking the Father who makes us strong enough to take part in everything bright and beautiful that he has for us.'

Whilst this is with volunteers in mind it applies to all. Not everyone can take an active role but we can all pray. Not just for volunteers and the work they are involved in but those involved in 'management' too. **The Christian Aid Big Brekkie** will be reported on as the final part of this article, hopefully the weather will be better than is forecast now!

So, I can report that we made £620.58p at the **Big Brekkie**, even though the weather was somewhat unpredictable. A sudden downpour saw everyone sat in the garden running to join the people sat in the church, the ladies manning the cake and plant stand were fine under their gazebo!

Grateful thanks to all who contributed in many and varied ways. We had a great team of volunteers, including from the other churches and from Ghostlight Performers who are willing to increasingly help at our events, which when moving tables and chairs, is wonderful. We know the Spirit moves in mysterious ways and it is only through the spirit that people come to Christ, we can only provide opportunities.

So here goes, encouragement from **Hebrews 10:24-25**

'And let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds.

Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the

habit of doing, but let us encourage one another- and all the more as you see the Day approaching.'

With love and blessings,

Joan



Calendar for June

- Sun 1st** Holy Communion at 10.00 am – Janice Hill
- Mon 2nd** Bible Study led by Hilary Smith at
13 Hatfield Road, Ainsdale – 10.30 am
- Sun 8th** Morning Worship at
Ainsdale Methodist Church at 10.45 am
- Mon 9th** Ladies Group – see item in magazine
- Sun 15th** Morning Worship at 10.00 am –
with Jeremy Lister
- Sat 21st** Performance by Ghostlight Drama Group in
the hall at 2.30 and 7.30 pm.
See Joan Green for tickets
- Sun 22nd** Morning Worship at 10.00 am – Hilary Smith.
Mike Smith will be playing the organ, and
Ainsdale Methodist congregation will be with us
- Tue 24th** Prayer in the church from 11.00 am
- Sun 29th** Team Service at Lord Street West.
Tim Meadows, URC Moderator will be taking
the service. Time to be confirmed.

Calendar for July


Sun 6th	Churches Together Service in the tent at the Ainsdale Village Show – 10.30 am
Mon 7th	Bible Study led by Hilary Smith at 13 Hatfield Road, Ainsdale – 10.30 am
Sat 12th	Ainsdale Open Gardens event – refreshments and plant stall in the garden. See item in the magazine under Community Garden.
Sat 12th	Ainsdale Village Singers Summer Concert at 7.30 pm. See item in magazine
Sun 13th	Morning Worship at Ainsdale Methodist Church at 10.45 am
Mon 14th	Ladies Group – see item in magazine
Tue 15th	Coffee Morning as usual, but also a thank you coffee morning in the garden for those people who had opened their gardens the previous weekend.
Sun 20th	Morning Worship at 10.00 am – Nigel Mawdsley
Sun 27th	Holy Communion at 10.00 am – Janice Hill. Ainsdale Methodist congregation will be with us.
Tue 29th	Prayer in the church from 11.00 am.

What is Teechers about?

John Godber's play Teechers is a fast, funny play about three students performing a show about their chaotic school life and a drama teacher who tries to make a difference. It's a witty, energetic look at education, inequality, and the power of the arts.

Get your tickets while they last!
(Link in bio)



 **GHOSTLIGHT PERFORMERS**
FOUNDED 2022

Presents

TEECHERS
by John Godber
Directed by Lucinda Green

21st June 2025
Ainsdale Village Church Hall
2:30pm & 7:30pm
Tickets £10.00

NODA
for every stage

Ticket Link
www.ticketsource.co.uk/ghostlight-performers

This amateur production of "Teechers" is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals Ltd. on behalf of Samuel French Ltd. www.concordtheatricals.co.uk

THE CAST

EDWARD JAMES as Ian 'Salty' Salters

KATIE ALLEN as Gail Saunders

AMELIE HAYES as Lillian 'Hobby' Hobson

DIRECTED BY
Lucinda Green

ASSISTANT DIRECTED BY
Vicky Birrell

COMMITTEE PRODUCER
Fi Billington

NODA
For every stage