



# The Link



The Magazine of

**Marshside Road Methodist Church Southport**

[www.marshside-methodist-southport.org.uk](http://www.marshside-methodist-southport.org.uk)



Priceless, but donations gratefully received

February 2015



**All smiles as we look forward to another year  
worshipping our amazing God**

## **Minister's Letter**

It is said that January is the most depressing month of the year. It's the month that has the shortest days, the worst weather and the financial debts of Christmas. The lack of sunlight can make us feel lethargic and depressed, and the lack of exercise and the fact that we are cooped up in a stuffy, centrally-heated house can make us feel edgy, irritable and stressed. In fact the third Monday of January, so the experts have worked out, is said to be the most depressing day of the year!

Now I don't know about you but I haven't found January depressing at all! For a start there are all of those good memories of Christmas still fresh in my mind. There were the excited children from Marshside Primary school crowding into the front porch ready to sing for thought for the day. Then there was the fun we all had as we joined together to worship God through the nursery rhyme nativity, who can't forget the innkeepers song? And then there was the carol service as young and old alike led by the organ and the choir and the Salvation Army band came together to remember the story of God coming to earth in human flesh. And of course there were the more moving times of worship, the shoe boxes for children in other countries, the advent calendars for the food bank and the appeal for Christmas presents for the children of the food bank. I was deeply moved as I stood at the front of church as person after person after person came and heaped up presents for the children under the tree; thank you.

Then there is so much for us to look forward to as a church this month and indeed in the coming year. We are hoping that the hall will be finished after the February half term. Doesn't it look so good already? A big thank you to all who have worked so hard to make it happen. Once we get the new floor down we won't know ourselves! We have the recommencement of all of all regular groups, all of which seem to be growing especially the parent and toddler group! I think they had 37 babies the first week back! The brigades are flourishing since they have joined together on a Wednesday evening and I know that the members are loving being together. I think that there is a really good feeling about our church at the moment and we are far from depressed.

The circuit have noticed how much work we do with children and young people and have offered to fund us for a Pais worker next year. What an encouragement for us all. For those of you that don't know the Pais project is a bridge between churches and schools. The young people engaged with the project are placed in a church for a year and, in Southport, work with the Schools work trust. They also work with their placement church and get involved with the youth work going on within that church. What a bonus that will be to our youth leaders! We just need to accommodate them for a year. Please if there is anyone out there who feels they can offer a room and meals to a young person for a year would you please get in touch soon?

Of course the best of all is that we have another year in which to look forward to worshipping our amazing God and seeing what God has in store for his church at Marshside this coming year. I for one think it's going to be the most spectacular year yet!

*Rev Jan*

### **One Door Closes.**

In January 2003, I began what was to become a huge part of my life for 11 years. Rev. Pauline had asked my friend, Angela Woodward, if she would consider taking over the Toddler Group at Marshside Road. Angela said she would, but only if I did it with her! I had recently retired after 35 years in the bank. When I was young, I always wanted to work with children but somehow life took a different direction! I agreed to "help" Angela.

We began with a few babies and toddlers, but somehow the group just kept on growing. Several times we have had to put on a waiting list as we had too many children to fit into the lounge along with their carers and of course all the toys. In 2008, Angela began full time work, Margaret Boston had been coming along to the group to offer Indian Head Massage to the mums (and often to me!). Margaret agreed to replace Angela, much to my delight.

The group goes from strength to strength and has a wonderful atmosphere. Friends are made at the group which last well into High School years. We have Christmas parties, trips to Windmill Farm and for the last few years we have raised money for Barnado's by joining their annual sponsored Big Toddle. The leadership team has grown and we have been very grateful to Avril Merone and Dorothy Taylor who are now part of the group. Lin Mayor has recently joined the team following my decision to 'retire'.

I have enjoyed seeing so many children pass through the group. I often see them with their mums out and about. It is wonderful to see so many coming to Holiday Club and Messy Church. It has been a real privilege to be involved in some small way with the lives of many families.

Margaret will tell you that I have been threatening to leave for some time. She has told me they would miss me as I have a loud voice!!

I really feel that now is the time to go, I'm sure I will miss the children (but not the noise!). Thank you to all who have supported us over the years and I know you will continue to support Margaret, Avril, Dorothy and Lin as they continue with this important outreach.

**Carol Drury**

### **Another Door Opens.**

In October 2013, John and Linda from Southport Foodbank came to Marshside Road to talk to us about their work, and we collected food for them at our Harvest Festival. Listening to John speak I thought, “that is something I would like to get involved with”. The next day, I went and had a look around and went home with an application form to become a volunteer. After I had submitted my form and had my references checked, I began to help out in December 2013. Initially I went on a Friday afternoon but now I go Mondays and Fridays all day.

It is appalling that in a supposedly 'wealthy' country like ours and an equally supposedly wealthy town like Southport, we should have a need for a Foodbank. Not just one Foodbank outlet, but there are now 7 in various locations around the town! Lakeside, where I work, is open from 1pm to 4pm every Monday and Friday. There is at least one outlet open every weekday.

The number of people who attend the Foodbank just keeps on growing. They come from all walks of life. It is very much a “there but for the grace of God go I” scenario.

On Friday 19th December we had 33 clients. At least 10 were large families so we probably fed about 100 people for 3 days. We also gave out special Christmas bags along with the toys so generously donated by our church family.

The main thing we are short of just now is space!! We have a portakabin for our warehouse, plus a small room in the main building. What we need is a much bigger space to weigh the food as it comes in, is then labelled clearly with the use by date, then it has to be put on the shelves ready to be made up into the food bags which go out. This is a mammoth task and we have different lists of food to go into single, couple, family or large family bags. Some days it is utter chaos. All the food comes into Lakeside and we then distribute whatever is needed by the other outlets.

We are hoping to raise between £3000 and £4000 in order to increase our storage space. This will be a huge task, but it is much needed, on health & safety grounds if nothing else! As I have just been given the task of warehouse manager it is something I will no doubt have to be involved with. If anyone has any fund raising ideas, please see me!

Very many thanks for all your generosity over the past 15 months. Clients come in our door embarrassed and upset, our aim is for them to have a smile on their face when they leave. Through the grace of God, they often do.

**Carol Drury**

## **Organists and Pianists**

I wonder how many of us sit and listen to our organists in Church, before, during and at the end of the services.

We are very lucky at Marshside that we have 3 people who can play the organ/piano so well to help the services flow with music.

The organists and pianists do a lot of background work with the pieces of music, trying to find and practice playing them, to get it right for the services. Our Choir Master, Glenn, photo copying pieces of music for the choir to sing when we have our special services and liaising with the Minister who is taking the service.

I know we do sit and talk to friends before the service starts and at the end, we are dashing round trying to catch someone before they go home, I do it as much as the next person, but I do try and sit for few minutes when the service has finished just to listen to the music the organist has chosen to play. It does soothe you go home and start doing the jobs you need to do, cooking the dinner for family the etc.

I do appreciate all that our organists/pianists do for us and I hope you will just sit quietly for a few minutes to appreciate the music. Even if you can't read a note of music, you might recognise some of the tunes and it would let our organists know we do appreciate all the hard work they do.

Thank You.

**A music lover, who would love to be able to play.**

## **Monday Evening Fellowship and the Wednesday Group.**

We held our annual joint Carol Service on Monday 8th December 2014 This was organised and led by the Wednesday Group. During the Service we had a collection for the Soup Kitchen and raised £86.00. We recently received this thank you from the Soup Kitchen.

### **Sheila Jones & Joan Owen.**

To our friends at

Marshside Rd.Methodist

And especially

The Monday Night Fellowship

And Wednesday groups.

May I express our deep gratitude for what you do for the Soup Kitchen and your recent gift of £86.

The money will be used to try and make Christmas a little special for the fifteen families we now serve outside the "Soupie" these in the main are families who would never approach us or the foodbanks directly but unfortunately are in real need. It is sad to report that even in this day families are having to make the choice of food or heat.

Your giving has and will make a difference to those we serve and your giving shows Gods love for those who generally are unloved, so thank you once again.

Love  Justin Dempster

PS. Gill said she had a wonderful time on Monday night, great fellowship and a wonderful welcome.

## **The Christmas Gifts that changed a life.**

Stories like this, always have a way of putting the right perspective on life, especially at this time of year.

Jean Thompson stood in front of her fifth-grade class on the very first day of school in the fall and told the children a lie. Like most teachers, she looked at her pupils and said that she loved them all the same, that she would treat them all alike. And that was impossible because there in front of her, slumped in his seat on the third row, was a little boy named Teddy Stoddard.

Mrs. Thompson had watched Teddy the year before and noticed he didn't play well with the other children, that his clothes were unkept and that he constantly needed a bath. And Teddy was unpleasant.

It got to the point during the first few months that she would actually take delight in marking his papers with a broad red pen, making bold X's and then marking the F at the top of the paper biggest of all. Because Teddy was a sullen little boy, no one else seemed to enjoy him, either.

At the school where Mrs. Thompson taught, she was required to review each child's records and put Teddy's off until last. When she opened his file, she was in for a surprise. His first-grade teacher wrote, "Teddy is a bright, inquisitive child with a ready laugh." "He does his work neatly and has good manners...he is a joy to be around."

His second-grade teacher wrote, "Teddy is an excellent student well-liked by his classmates, but he is troubled because his mother has a terminal illness and life at home must be a struggle."

His third-grade teacher wrote, "Teddy continues to work hard but his mother's death has been hard on him. He tries to do his best but his father doesn't show much interest and his home life will soon affect him if some steps aren't taken."

Teddy's fourth-grade teacher wrote, "Teddy is withdrawn and doesn't show much interest in school. He doesn't have many friends and sometimes sleeps in class. He is tardy and could become a problem."

By now Mrs. Thompson realized the problem, but Christmas was coming fast. It was all she could do, with the school play and all, until the day before the holidays began and she was suddenly forced to focus on Teddy Stoddard.

Her children brought her presents, all in beautiful ribbon and bright paper, except for Teddy's, which was clumsily wrapped in a heavy brown paper grocery bag. Mrs. Thompson took pains to open it in the middle of the other presents.

Some of the children started to laugh when she found a rhinestone bracelet with some of the stones missing, and a bottle that was one-quarter full of cologne. She stifled the



children's laughter when she exclaimed how pretty the bracelet was, putting it on, and dabbing some of the perfume behind the other wrist. Teddy Stoddard stayed behind just long enough to say, "Mrs. Thompson, today you smelled just like my mom used to."

After the children left she cried for at least an hour. On that very day, she quit teaching reading, writing, and speaking. Instead, she began to teach children. Jean Thompson paid particular attention to one they all called "Teddy."

As she worked with him, his mind seemed to come alive. The more she encouraged him, the faster he responded. On days where there would be an important test, Mrs. Thompson would remember that cologne. By the end of the year he had become one of the smartest children in the class and...well, he had also become the "pet" of the teacher who had once vowed to love all of her children exactly the same.

A year later she found a note under her door, from Teddy, telling her that of all the teachers he'd had in elementary school, she was his favourite. Six years went by before she got another note from Teddy.

He then wrote that he had finished high school, third in his class, and she was still his favourite teacher of all time.

Four years after that, she got another letter, saying that while things had been tough at times, he'd stayed in school, had stuck with it, and would graduate from college with the highest of honours. He assured Mrs. Thompson she was still his favourite teacher.

Then four more years passed and yet another letter came. This time he explained that after he got his bachelor's degree, he decided to go a little further. The letter explained that she was still his favourite teacher, but that now his name was a little longer. The letter was signed, Theodore F. Stoddard, M.D.

The story doesn't end there. You see, there was yet another letter that Spring. Teddy said he'd met this girl and was to be married. He explained that his father had died a couple of years ago and he was wondering...well, if Mrs. Thompson might agree to sit in the pew usually reserved for the mother of the groom. And guess what, she wore that bracelet, the one with several rhinestones missing. And I bet on that special day, Jean Thompson smelled just like...well, just like the way Teddy remembered his mother smelling on their last Christmas together.

### **THE MORAL:**

You never can tell what type of impact you may make on another's life by your actions, or lack of action.



## **Melissa's Thought for the Month – February 2015**

My uncle who emigrated to Australia the year when I was born had apparently a favourite saying which was often repeated to me. It was "Perseverance, cork and glue; Eighteen eighty two". I have only just been wondering what it really meant to him, 1882 was the year of his birth, but why cork and glue?

Now I can visualise bottle corks bobbing about in a pond. Did the young "uncle" Norman try to make tiny model boats by glueing match sticks to corks (or half corks) and match sticks glued on for keel and mast? Certainly such a project would require considerable "perseverance".

In life there are many things which need us to persevere. I have written before of Dr Sangster's "Path to Perfection" and the near impossibility of keeping on that path or building local Church community so that really expresses "the Body of Christ" in the world.

There is another saying which is "If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again!". It is up to us to remember that each new day we can sing (mentally if not audibly) "One more step along the world I go" and "Each new thing that I see You'll be looking at along with me".

As we have lately been frequently reminded of the First World War we recall some of the songs sung on the march. Another one "It's a long, long way to Tipperary, but my heart's right there." Do I remember correctly that Tipperary is in the centre of Ireland? If so it was certainly a long way from the battlefields of the Somme in the days before regular travel by air!

There is also "a long, long road a winding" ahead of us. None of us know how long that "road" on Earth is to be in our care. People are living longer and longer because of the good medical care and encouragement of healthy life styles.

It is also said that "only the good die young". If the reverse is true, I have no complaint about that! I alone know how very much more I have to learn and to improve and how much perseverance I need to make that further step along the road.

There is also a "long, long road a-winding", "Round the corners of the world I turn" and "(we) know that all the new things that (we) see (our Lord) will be looking at along with (us)"

Some of you will have been watching the series "Planet Earth" on television. I was glad that Professor Brian Cox left open the whole question of religious belief and suggested that possibly Earth was the only planet in the whole Universe where humanity had evolved and been able to grasp the idea of a Creator God. Long gone are the days of my youth when there was supposedly a conflict between Science and Religion!

Certainly we can all persevere to the end of our own individual personal road trusting God to fulfil this good purpose for each of us and each of our loved ones.

**Melissa.**



## Church Family News

It is hard to believe how quickly life returns to normal after Christmas. By the time this edition of the Link is published, it will be February. However, since the last edition in December, there is considerable family news to share, some happy news but also news which has saddened us within the church. During the week before Christmas, we lost two of our much loved church members. **Monica Sloman** passed away quite suddenly and unexpectedly and **Malcolm Baxter**, who has not enjoyed good health for some time, sadly lost the battle. Services to celebrate the lives of both Monica & Malcolm were held here in church and our love and prayers have been with Eric, Audrey and their families.

**Muriel Hardman**, who had been attending Sunday morning worship for some time prior to becoming poorly and eventually being nursed in a nursing home, also passed away. Again, our love and prayers are with her family and friends. Her funeral service took place out of Southport. The funeral of **Anne Beattie** late of Marshside Road took place here in church last week. We pray that her family, who mostly live away from Southport, felt comforted by the service led by Jan. We were also sorry to hear that **Kath Law** had lost her mother just before Christmas and **Stephanie** her Grandma. Our love to you both and your family.

It is great, having had sad news to share, to be able to rejoice in good news! We were delighted, on arriving at the Christmas Eve Communion service, to be greeted by **Avril** and **George Merone**, announcing the safe arrival of their first granddaughter, **Gracie**, just hours before. After such a long and difficult wait for this event, it was wonderful at last to be able to send our congratulations to proud parents **Katie & Paul**.

On 28th December, we welcomed **Emily & Elliot** into the church family as they were baptised. They, with their parents, **Isabelle & Michael**, have recently returned to live in Southport and it was good to see so many of their extended family, several of them known to us here at Marshside Road through their connection with Girls' Brigade in the past.

Two of our 'senior' members celebrated 90+ birthdays in January. **Melissa Wood** on 11th January and one week later on the 18th, **Jane Biggs** celebrated her birthday with friends from church. We hope you both had very happy birthdays, Melissa & Jane. Not yet quite in the same age bracket but celebrating a special birthday this month is **Geoff Lynwode**. Happy birthday Geoff. Have a good day.

Unfortunately, **Melissa** had a fall which resulted in her spending some time in Chase Heyes. Fortunately, nothing was broken & she is now home. However, trying to get out

and about a bit again, she has had another couple of falls recently. It is hard to tell Melissa to take it easy but do take care and our love and prayers are with you Melissa. **Peggy Headley** has been having a rough time recently and is having to rest. Again, our thoughts and prayers are with you Peggy and we hope you will soon be feeling much better. It is unusual for **Florence Hodge** to miss services but she also has not been feeling too well recently. Please get well soon, Florence, we do miss you and are remembering you in prayer.

We are blessed, here at Marshside Road, with quite extensive premises – a mixed blessing, however, when faced with all the work and maintenance which is constantly needed. However, it does mean that we are such a busy church and at times, even our premises are just not big enough! Once more, our Parent & Toddler group is bursting at the seams and the leaders, in the interest of health and safety, have had to start a waiting list for parents and their little ones wishing to come along. This is a very special group and for many, the first contact with our church so please pray for the leaders and all the work which goes on there.

As we share our family news (and again, I apologise if I have missed anyone), it is a reminder that every person, young or not so young, who is known to us is valued in our church family and so precious to God. Please pray for all the work which goes on here, for all the church organisations and their leaders and for all who use our premises. Please pray especially for our minister, **Jan**, who works so hard to fulfil her calling to lead people into a relationship with the Lord Jesus which is, above everything else, the most important mission of our church.

**God Bless,**

**Dorothy Simpkin**

### **Next Issue**

The next edition of **The Link** is due to be published on the **Sunday the 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2015**. Therefore, items for inclusion in the next edition need to reach me by **Sunday the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February 2015**. Thanks, Mike ([MikeOwen10@aol.com](mailto:MikeOwen10@aol.com))

# Marshside Road Methodist Church, Southport, PR9 9TL

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Ministers : Revd. Jan Fraser

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## Sunday Services

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| 09:00 am. | Holy Communion – first Sunday of each Month              |
| 10:30 am. | Morning Worship – including Crèche, J Team and Teenscene |
| 18:30 am. | Evening Fellowship – see Weekly Notices                  |

## Weekly Programme

| Day       | Meeting   | Time          | Contact                           |
|-----------|---|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| Monday    | Parent & Toddler Group                            | 09:15 – 11:45 | Mrs Carol Drury (226830)          |
|           | Preschool   | 09:15 – 11:45 | Mrs Chris Alsop (506544)          |
|           | Playgroup   | 12:50 – 14:45 | Mrs Chris Alsop (506544)          |
|           | Monday Evening Fellowship                         | 20:00 –       | Mrs Joan Owen (220436)            |
| Tuesday   | Preschool   | 09:15 – 11:45 | Mrs Chris Alsop (506544)          |
|           | Playgroup   | 12:50 – 14:45 | Mrs Chris Alsop (506544)          |
|           | Bible Study Fellowship                            | 10:45 –       | Mrs Dorothy Taylor (211643)       |
|           | Prayer Fellowship                                 | 19:00 – 20:00 | Mrs Pat Wright (213647)           |
| Wednesday | Preschool   | 09:15 – 11:45 | Mrs Chris Alsop (506544)          |
|           | Boys' Brigade & Girls' Brigade                    | 18:30 – 21:30 | Mrs Kay Owen (225126)             |
|           | Wednesday Group - every 4 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday |               | Miss Heather Jackson (532977)     |
| Thursday  | Preschool   | 09:15 – 11:45 | Mrs Chris Alsop (506544)          |
|           | Thought for the Day                               | 10:15 –       | Mr George Phillips (514795)       |
|           | Playgroup   | 12:50 – 14:45 | Mrs Chris Alsop (506544)          |
|           | Choir Practice                                    | 19:30 – 21:00 | Mr Glenn Howard (840485)          |
| Friday    | Preschool   | 09:15 – 11:45 | Mrs Chris Alsop (506544)          |
|           | Chris Wright's School of Dance & Drama            | 16:00 – 19:15 | Miss Alison Wright (0773 4305348) |
| Saturday  | Chris Wright's School of Dance & Drama            | 09:15 – 15:00 | Miss Alison Wright (0773 4305348) |
|           | Badminton Social Night                            | 19:00 – 22:00 | Mr Mike Owen (01704 225126)       |

|                  |                                  |                              |
|------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Other Contacts : | Church Notices                   | Mrs Dorothy Simpkin (229987) |
|                  | Church Stewards                  | Rev Jan Fraser (227296)      |
|                  | Cradle Roll                      | Mrs Margaret Boston (211548) |
|                  | Magazine/Website Editor          | Mr Mike Owen (225126)        |
|                  | Action for Children Co-ordinator | Mrs Dilys Stead (211342)     |
|                  | Pastoral Committee               | Mrs Joan Owen (220436)       |
|                  | Premises Letting Officer         | Mr David Goldson (514390)    |
|                  | World Missions                   | Mrs Lin Mayor (212059)       |

### **Disclaimer :**

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