

Connexion

The magazine
of the family of
Independent
Methodist
Churches

MAR/APR 2026
IN THIS ISSUE

One of the difficulties with a bi-monthly magazine is that events can occur at the wrong time for the production schedule. Of course, this is not only an issue with the Connexion magazine. In fact it strikes me as slightly ridiculous that all of my transport magazines include good wishes for Christmas in the December issue, which are published any time from the second week in November, and of course have to be prepared even earlier!

In 2026, the March-April Connexion will appear three weeks before Easter, well into Lent and therefore some five weeks after the Connexion launched the Bible Society's eight-week online course. There was little opportunity to publicise the course in advance, and some people have been unable to sign up for all eight Sunday evening



online sessions, because of other commitments. However, the sessions have been (or will be) recorded, so it will be possible to access the material at convenient times, and fellowships will be able to integrate the course into their own Bible study programmes. If you wish to access the material, please contact Chris Elsdon on it@imchurches.org.uk.

The course sessions are entitled: Introducing the Bible; Genesis - the story begins; Exodus - the story of freedom; Kings - the story of power; Exile - the story of loss; Jesus - the story of rescue; Acts - the story of mission; and Revelation - the story completed. The course shows how all the books, characters and events in the Bible fit together in God's big story, from Creation, through the Fall, redemption through the death and resurrection of Jesus, and ultimate restoration of the new heavens and new earth.

The course is pitched at an easy-to-understand level, and is a good starting-point to deeper study of the Bible. Some of my favourite Bible verses are 2 Timothy 3:16-17: All scripture is God-breathed, and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man [and woman] of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. That is why all Christians need to learn and understand what is in the Bible, and how to apply it in their daily lives. I can thoroughly recommend it. - Brian Rowney

Page 2/3: Statement of Faith

Page 9/10: Church News

Page 13-15: In The Joy
Of The Lord

Page 4/5: Downall Green

Page 11: Church News
Photos

Page 16: Bethel
(Newton)

Page 5-8: Connexional
Committee Report

Page 12: World Mission

Independent Methodist Churches Statement of Faith

The Church

We believe that the Church is the whole company of the redeemed in heaven and on earth and consists of all who are united to God through faith in Christ.

We believe that Jesus Christ is the head of the Church, which is His body. The purpose of the Church is to worship God, to promote the fellowship of his people, to preach the Gospel and to make disciples of all nations.

In Matthew 16: 18, Jesus told Peter that 'on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it'. The rock to which he was referring was Peter's confession that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God - the rock was not Peter himself, because two different words were used - petros (a stone, a pebble) for Peter, but petra (a rock, a boulder). However, what was the church that Jesus intended to build? The Greek word that Matthew used is ekklesia, from the verb kaleo (to call) and the prefix ek- (out), i.e. people that were called out. The word 'church' does not appear in the Old Testament, but is used over a hundred times in the New Testament. In the Septuagint (Greek) version of the Old Testament, the word ekklesia is used to translate the Hebrew word for 'assembly' or 'gathering'. The use of the word 'church' to denote a building is thought to come from the Greek phrase kurikon oikia - the house of the Lord - which in the Middle Ages was shortened to kurkon, from which we get the words church (English), kirk (Scots) and Kirche (German). Ironically, the French word église (and the Welsh eglwys) does come from ekklesia. Although the word 'church' is often used to refer to both buildings and denominations, this was never the case in New Testament times.

How do we know this? In Colossians 4:15, Paul sends greetings to Nympha and the church in her house - it wasn't the house that was the church, it was the people meeting in it. In both his letters to the Corinthians, he writes to the church of God in Corinth, while other letters e.g. Philippians are addressed to 'the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi', so the church at a particular place consisted of all the believers in that location. The church consists of people who are called out from the world, called to be saints (Romans 1:7), and called to be holy (1 Corinthians 1:2). What they have in common is their faith in Jesus - Peter's confession that he was the Son of God - and it is that faith on which the church is built. This applies, not only to us but to those who are no longer with us, indeed to all that have believed in Jesus over the past two thousand years.

Paul provides the justification for the second part of the statement: We believe that Jesus Christ is the head of the Church, which is His body. Colossians 1:18 says that 'he is the head of the body, the church', and it couldn't be more simple than that. Jesus Christ is the head of the church, not the archbishop of Canterbury, not the Pope, nor anyone else. These people may be leaders, but their responsibility is to lead

according to the will of Jesus, to know, understand and apply that will. However, this responsibility is not given to them alone. Paul told the Corinthians that 'we have the mind of Christ' (1 Cor 2:16), so all can hear from him, all can discern his will. However, hearing from Jesus is not the same as hearing from me or anyone else. A young child, looking at a picture of Jesus on a wall, said that you could say 'Hi' to Jesus, but he didn't say 'Hi' back. That is why we need to cultivate our prayer lives, and to take time reading and understanding God's word, both in Sunday worship and in our own time, so that we know, as the wristbands used to say, W-W-J-D - what would Jesus do?

And what does Jesus want his church to do? The last part of the statement reads: The purpose of the Church is to worship God, to promote the fellowship of his people, to preach the Gospel and to make disciples of all nations. First of all, to worship God. Jesus himself told the woman at the well (John 4:23-24): - A time is coming and has now come, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth. Don't get hung up on worship and equate it to singing hymns, songs and choruses - it's a lot more than that and includes, for instance, listening to God's word and applying it in our daily lives.

Promoting the fellowship of his people - the writer to the Hebrews urged his readers: 'let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another'. We should not be meeting merely out of habit or a sense of duty, but because we want to learn about God, to worship him collectively, to encourage each other and be encouraged by each other. We need to pay special attention to those, who for whatever reason are unable to get to our meetings - if people can't get to the church, the church must get to them.

Jesus told his apostles to 'go and make disciples of all nations' (Matthew 28:19), but the responsibility was not theirs alone. Although they travelled widely around the known world, they were limited by space and time. That responsibility has been passed on to the church: Colossians 1:25-27 - I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fulness - the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them (the church, i.e. me and you) God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles (specifically, the unbelieving Gentiles) the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Just before being taken to heaven, Jesus told his disciples that they would be his witnesses, in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Not everyone is sent to the ends of the earth, but we all have our Jerusalem, wherever we live and work. Some of us may have a Judea and Samaria: for two of Astley's leaders it used to be places they went with a gospel band, for me and Sue it could be the East Lancs Railway and the Model Bus Federation. My calling isn't the same as yours, yours isn't the same as mine. The church has three obligations, to God (upward), to each other (inward) and to the world (outward). Let us, according to the gifts, equipping and opportunities that God provides us with, fulfil the purposes that he has set out for us as members of his church.

(all scriptures taken from the New International Version)

- Brian Rowney

Downall Green

Moving from two of our newest churches to a well-established one, Downall Green sits close to the boundary between Merseyside (St Helens Metropolitan Borough) and Greater Manchester (Wigan), on Victoria Road, Garswood.

The history of the church began in 1759, when John Wesley preached at Downall Green and, although his initial reception was hostile, by the end of his message the word of God prevailed and all the fierceness had melted away. Wesley returned in 1761, but it was not until 1832 that a church was established, under its older name of Brockstage. Meeting at the cottage of Thomas Clarke, a nailmaker, in Church Street, they later moved to the cottages of three members before building a school chapel which opened in 1869. Although this had seating for 100, the increase in young people over the next twenty years resulted in the present building on Victoria Road being opened in 1894. Even then, demand was such that the premises were later enlarged to accommodate 200 children and young people.



Sunday worship starts at 10.45, and the first Sunday in each month is when Café Church takes place. The church was - and is - the only free church in the area, and today is firmly established in the community with a wide range of midweek activities, including: Art Society on Monday mornings and a Men's Group on Monday evenings two meetings on Tuesday mornings (Knit and Natter, and Prayer and Cakes) Toddler group on Wednesday mornings and Crochet group on Wednesday evenings



a Card Crafting group on Thursday mornings Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays are particularly busy days. As well as the activities listed above, the Pre-Loved Gift Shop is open from 10.00 to 14.00, selling donated clothes, books and toys and offering free school uniforms (mainly for local primary schools). At the same times, the Orangery Cafe is open, with a range of hot and cold drinks, cakes and snacks. Other groups using the building include a Community Craft Group and a monthly reading group, and an Independent

Councillor Surgery takes place on the second Saturday of each month.



Connexional Committee 7th February 2026 - New Silksworth

We were welcomed by Phil Oliver. This was the first time we had more people on zoom than in person, as some were unable to travel due to ill health on the day.

General Secretary's Report

Two former Methodist churches in the Humberside / East Yorkshire area have made enquiries about becoming IM churches. One enquiry is no longer being pursued, but the second enquiry is much more focussed on the spiritual as well as the practical elements of buildings etc. It is hoped that a number of Officers will meet with the church in the coming months. Shaun has attended several meetings since the last Connexional Committee Meeting, including the CTE Presidents Dinner held at Lambeth Palace. The four current Presidents and the Archbishop of York each made a short presentation, and the night was a great encouragement. Lamberhead Green Church will be closing at the end of March 2026. Several volunteering opportunities are to be advertised, especially around the work of the Resource Centre as well as a Minute Secretary.

Administration Group

As officers need to provide budgets for the coming years, it was agreed that fFinance send previous year’s figures to all officers, to help them to see what previous spends have been and enable them to put a budget together. As Annual Meeting 2027 will held in June, we discussed a new timetable for Connexional Committee meetings, as current meeting dates will need to be adjusted. There has been a change of venue for the 2026 Annual meeting, which will now be held at the Radisson Blu hotel in Dur-ham. The dates remain the same, Sat 25th and Sun 26th July 2026. An extension has been agreed with Chris Elsdon for an additional 3 months at 1 day a week to link the website to Eventbrite and to allow online resource centre purchases. The Connexional website remains a work in progress. Lone working apps/devices for use for all staff members are being reviewed, as lone working is now taking place more often.

Church Support Group

The group continues to support our churches. The members of Noble St, Bolton will be vacating their building, which is now sold, on 24th February. They are looking forward to a new future more central to the town where they can start a new cause. Derek Barron has been seconded to Bethel, Colne for a year and is preaching there at least once a month. Church Support have been working alongside the Church in developing relationships with Elisha House, a half-way house for released offenders. Since the death of John Crabtree, members of the group are to meet with the church and Derek to discuss the way forward. The Roadshow to Thorney Close Church was a great success, with other local churches attending. The possibility of having a Church Support worker based at one of the churches in the area was discussed and most people thought that would be helpful. It was agreed that Church Support and Ministry would meet with the North East Churches to discuss ongoing training and support, as many churches had not been present at the roadshow. The group has welcomed new members: Chris Woodall is our contact with Mark Curtis and Passion for Jesus min-istries and Church planting, Heather Lomas brings extensive experience and skills in marketing, social media and events planning, Ruth Williams is a children’s and youth worker whilst also working extensively with refugees in her church.

Restructuring Group Report

Joy Elkins gave a presentation on behalf of the Group. They have put together a sug-gested structure, showing Trustees, who would be separate from any other roles, and Operations, both Admin/Legal and Mission. It is suggested that we have nine Trustees with various listed skills and for the Operations there is a list of areas that are expected to be covered by the Connexion, based on requests from the churches in the recent survey. The meeting discussed the ongoing need for vision and to continue to seek God for His direction. It was agreed that we hold a time of prayer and fasting for the Connexion, to be organised by the Enabling Group.

Ecumenical Officer Report

‘Thy Kingdom Come’ this year takes place from Thursday 14 to Sunday 24 May. Re-sources are available from www.thykingdomcome.global/resources-0 . It was suggest-ed that the time of prayer and fasting for the Connexion may be organised to coincide with this event. Bill was unable to attend the Service of Thanksgiving to mark the 80th Anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations General Assembly but Shaun, as General Secretary was in attendance. This was held at Methodist

Central Hall Westminster where the first meeting took place. Bill was also invited to the Confirmation of Election for the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury, but was unable to attend so Lisa as President-Elect and Shaun as General Secretary represented us. The service, at which Bishop Sarah Mullally became the Archbishop, was held at St Paul’s Cathedral on 28th January.

Education Organisers Report

We have two students in their third year of study, one taking the second year, and another student has withdrawn. Student numbers are low and, along with the Ministry Organiser and AWE Academy Director, we will be looking into how we can promote the Education Scheme within our churches. We continue to promote the AWE acade-my training events. There has been positive feedback from those who have attended so far. It was agreed that we increase the AWE Academy hours to 3 days a week, to accommodate the work that the Director is doing for the Connexion. The study week-end planned for the end of February is to be led by Rev Tim Carter (Baptist Minister and lecturer at Cranmer Hall, Durham) on the subject of The Bible and Exegesis. The October weekend takes place from 2nd to 4th and will be led by Dave Burke on the subject of mental health and the gospel. The Fellowship and Bible Conference will be held on Friday 24th & Saturday 25th April 2026 at the Garstang Golf & Country Club. The speaker will be Antony Billington, Pastor of the Beacon Church in Ashton in Mak-erfield and Theology Advisor to the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity. Booking details and forms have been sent out from the Resource Centre.

Enabling Group

Discussions in the two meetings since Annual Meeting have included: A review of the Connexional Prayer Times; The Connexional Plan – including the Nolan Principles for comment and review; The Connexional Calendar; best use of Connexional Reserves, and the 2025 Charity Governance Code. Officers are encouraged to attend meetings whenever possible, as it is good to come together to share plans and concerns.

Finance Committee

Following a trial of bringing the accountancy system in house, we are now able to do our own accountancy procedures which will save money and speed up the process. David Hughes has taken this on for the time being, with Laura also doing some of this work as cover for David. The accountants will continue to deal with payroll. The Fi-nance committee have suggested that we ask churches requesting grant support to investigate outside grant support as well, so that the work won’t stop when Connex-ional support ends. An application for a WYFC worker for Culcheth was agreed, and Culcheth have been asked to also look for outside grant funding. A grant application from Kent Street was also agreed. Funds of £78k for the sale of Croxton church are due to be received.

Northwood Centre

A special meeting was held in January regarding the future of Northwood, and made the following recommendations:

- 1. Keep the site
- 2. Upgrade the site to bring it to an acceptable level of comfort and use to make it more attractive to hire (e.g. WI-FI; TV etc) for both hall and cottage
- 3. Use an external agency to market and control the bookings

- 4. Should a church seek to hire the hall, they should be encouraged as long as they can agree our Statements of Faith & Practice
- 5. If we were approached for a longer term let on the cottage then this be considered especially if it was a Christian couple/family and maybe offer them a reduced rent if they would act as caretakers of the site.
- 6. Trial the new procedure for a year
- 7. Review in 12 months.

This was agreed along with a possible timetable including a quarterly report to Connexional Committee. Alan Britton will produce a monthly report on expenditure/usage etc.

Ministry Committee

The Ministry Committee co-opted Len Ogilvie to advise and support the team, drawing on his experience as Ministry Organiser. A letter was sent to Andrew Rigby, expressing thanks for many years of service as Connexional Minister and conveying best wishes for his ongoing service at his home church, Spring View. Tony Argent and Norman Prescott are now listed as Emeritus Ministers, due to ill health and infirmity. Letters have been circulated to all Ministers outlining Continual Personal Development (CPD) reporting requirements, with support offered for report submission. To help them attend at least one Connexional Training Weekend within each 5-year reporting cycle, Ministers will be invited to relevant events (including the Education Study Weekends) in both the year preceding and the year of their CPD Report. Five Ministers qualify for a Long Service Certificate in 2026. and Mary Gray from our Easington Lane Church received her certificate in early January. Certain ministers are no longer connected to an IM church, sometimes due to a church closure. The Ministry Committee were seeking advice on what we do in this situation.

Safeguarding Report

Two safeguarding issues have been reported and dealt with since the last meeting. A Safeguarding training day for Wigan and Leigh Circuits is to be arranged for some time in March this year.

Merger Team

The Association met in December 2025 and agreed the updated Objects and the Dissolution Clause of the Articles of Association. These have now been lodged with Companies House. The remaining changes to the Articles will not require Charity Commission approval so we can change them whenever we decide to.

World Missions Report

Bryn Church have now accepted P into church membership. The Connexion are now able to support L&P as a couple, rather than just L as a single person. Liz Greenhalgh has made the committee aware that she is currently working for a church and no longer for a missionary organisation. As part of the recent change from 'Overseas' to 'World Missions', an amended policy will be proposed at the next Connexional Committee meeting, that a person must be doing missionary work with a missionary organisation, OR a church group/organisation, to be financially supported by the Connexion. On this basis it was agreed that we continue to support Liz in her work.

Alison Tipping, Medlock Valley Circuit Rep.



Church News

BETHEL CHURCH, COLNE - CHRISTMAS MEAL AT ELISHA HOUSE

On the 9TH December, our men's snooker club enjoyed a beautiful prepared meal by the staff and volunteers at Elisha House. This meal was a thank you, to our men who have supported them all the

year round, by having breakfast with the staff and residents once a week. There were thirteen of us, including Derek Barron, an I.M. minister, who has been kindly loaned to us, for the whole of next year, by our Roman Road (Failsworth) Church, to further foster our relationship with Elisha House, and to assist us at Bethel to grow within our community.

As many of you may know, Elisha House is a rehabilitation centre for addicts, particularly those hooked on drink and drugs. Each week we witness lives changed and people turning to the Lord, in a place filled with love and compassion. Many of the men there have spent a lifetime in and out of prison, often being referred to Elisha House by the probation service, as a last chance.

Mothers have been found banging on the door, pleading for them to take in their sons, in sheer desperation, as they watch their loved ones dying before their very eyes, due to the effects of drugs, particularly Ketamine, which is rife amongst our young people.

Derek Barron is also one of the chaplains at Manchester prison, and is an ideal person to forge links with these people, and our church. Please pray for Derek and the work he is undertaking, and for the fellowship at Bethel, as make no mistake, we are really struggling.

LONG LANE, LIVERPOOL - Welcome to our newest members

It was a pleasure to welcome three friends from our congregation into membership of Long Lane church. Linda Edwards joined our Tuesday Craft Group some five years ago, and went on to join our Sunday worship service and our Christian Endeavour. Jean Shepherd, a local resident, began coming to the Craft Group soon after it was first started and is a regular attendee at the services on a Sunday. Both were offered the right hand of fellowship on Harvest Sunday.

Our third new member, Paul Gillespie, was in Romania where his wife's family live. On his return, he accepted the right hand of fellowship on Remembrance Sunday. Paul and his wife Marianna came along to our Bible study held in a member's home, and then became part of the church. Paul now plays an important part of our gardening/maintenance team.

We are looking forward to welcoming a fourth member, in the near future, health permitting.

Sandra O'Nions

RAMSEY, ISLE of MAN

The members of Ramsey IM Church ('New Life') had a busy few months at the end of 2025.

At the start of November, we held the first baptism in the new portable baptistry, bought in memory of our past minister Keith Price. It was fitting that the first candidate was his son Tim. We used to have baptisms in the sea, but have not done this for many years, so he has not had the opportunity until now. It was a good opportunity for church members to invite family and friends, and it has led to two people attending on Sundays more regularly and more contact with others.

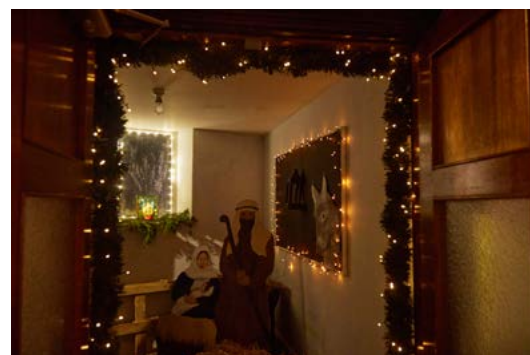


Then we got to work preparing to turn the church into an indoor light display for our Christmas outreach, while regular Sunday meetings continued as usual in the smaller hall next door. We decorated the church with all kinds of creative illuminated

displays, including seven stained-glass-effect panels, light/shadow-boxes, a 6-foot angel, a stable in the porch, and a manger at the front. The display was open every evening in the week before Christmas, and around 190 people came through during that time. We had also made a Christmas-tree-shaped stained glass panel (with palette-wood



frame) for the Town Hall's Festival of Christmas Trees. People who saw the display seemed to find it moving and thought provoking, and we are hoping to be able to repeat the event next Christmas!



Church News Photos

Due to a sudden glut of news items, some photos that had previously been submitted had to be held over to this issue.

Risley - Remembrance Sunday service

The church was decorated for the Remembrance service by the children. They meet on a regular basis for Bible Crafts and in their most recent meeting they made a wreath from some colour experiments created in their previous session.

During the service the wreath and other symbols of remembrance that the children had made were laid at the altar rail, putting their beautiful creation front and centre in our service of Remembrance. Cole and Iris Kershaw helped to create. And as if that wasn't enough, they also made some 'the display, and they also made some poppy biscuits'!

Our photo shows Iris, proudly displaying her culinary skills.



Stockton Heath - Weekend away Group photo at Thornleigh Christian Hotel, Grange-over-Sands.

Thatto Heath

Service of celebration to commemorate Dennis Roughley's 50 years of IM Ministry.



Hello everyone,

As was mentioned in the report from the October Connexional Committee meeting, we have changed our name to World Missions. This is to reflect the changes taking place in mission around the world as well as the growing need for mission here in the UK. As a committee we want to support our missionaries as best we can, and this is just the first step.

However, it is not just our missionaries who are called to mission. We all are. We want to support you as individuals and as churches in Mission. We want to hear from you about how you are spreading the gospel and how we as a committee can help. Whether it is talking to someone in the supermarket, short term mission trips, or if you feel that God is calling you to dedicate your life to Mission, then we are ready, willing and able to support you. I know I ask this at every annual meeting

but I am going to ask again. Please, pray for our missionaries. Pray for them and the work God has called them to. Thank you
Carrie O'Nions World Missions Organiser



L. and P. are on the move! After many months of seeking the Lord's guidance for the next stage of their service among North Africans, they now feel led to relocate to France. The practical reasons for this have been becoming increasingly clear. From the start of this year they would have a large increase in expenditure in their current location, as well as having to pay income tax there, now that P. is no longer part of an NGO. They also hope to move nearer to P's elderly mother. Meanwhile the Lord has given them a clear vision of a ministry among the many North Africans living in various cities in France. Some have accepted the Gospel and are in French churches. However, there is still a great mission field there. They are praying for God's leading to the right city, for closure with friends in their current home and help with everything necessary for the move.

Liz Greenhalgh is continuing with the many and varied aspects of her ministry in Campina, Romania. The after-school programme is again up and running, bringing great benefit to the children involved. Liz's fellow-workers in the children and youth programme at the church have now moved into the house next door to her which was previously occupied by American missionaries. This has proved very helpful in arranging meetings for prayer and planning. Pray that the young people will grow deeper in their love for God. Liz has now been in contact with the lady recently released from prison and was able to pray with her. There is much need for physical, mental and spiritual healing.

David and Mary Robinson were encouraged that most of the Thai groups held their meetings in the winter months despite bad weather and low attendances. This was well worthwhile, as they enjoyed a rich time of fellowship and there was a definite keenness to study God's word. Each of the groups has been set a target of reaching one or two new members this year. Please pray for the fellowship group leaders, that they might enthuse their members to fully serve the Lord. Preparations are already underway for organizing the summer camp and an attractive poster, together with application forms are already in circulation. Meanwhile do pray also for the Spring Fellowship Weekend planned for the end of April.

In the Joy of the Lord

Atherton: Jayne Margaret Handley (11 July 1960 - 26 November 2025)

Jayne was born on 11th July 1960 to Colin and Margaret Handley. Jayne had three siblings, Stephen and twin sisters Julie and Lisa. Jayne's family was involved in the start up of our Church. Jayne attended our Church from a very early age. As a youngster Jayne loved ballet and tap dancing and would perform at our Church socials. She loved music and loved to go to pantomimes often taking her nieces and nephews, whom she adored.

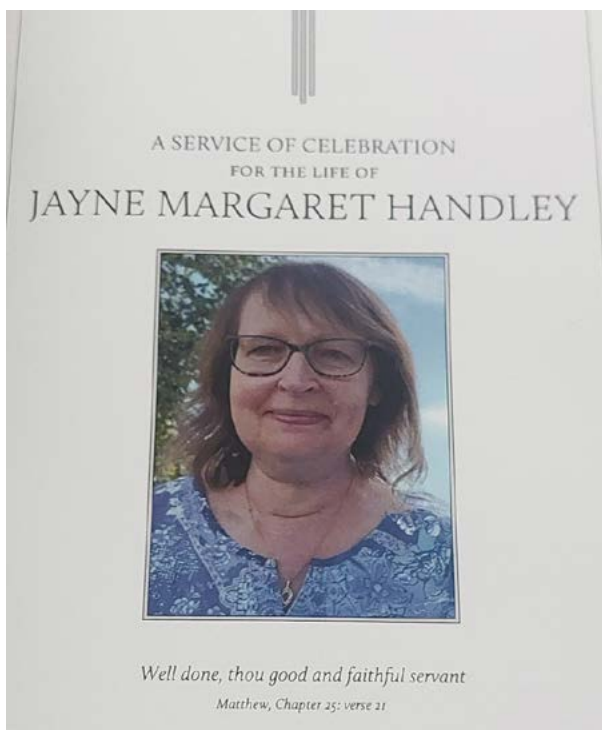
Jayne went to a local college after leaving school to study nursing. She adored her job and became a sister at Salford Royal Hospital. She was so well liked that her staff on the ward nominated her for Nurse of the Year award, which she won.

Every Christmas as a youth club and Sunday school, we would go around carol singing. This was always one of the highlights of the Church year. Jayne suggested that we should go to sing for the patients on her ward, one of whom was Joanne Lewis and so we adopted Joanne into our Church family. Joanne and Jayne became inseparable and have been wonderful for each other, Joanne chauffeur and Jayne nurse.

Unfortunately due to ill health Jayne had to retire from nursing at the age of 40 years old but nursing never left her.

Jayne devoted her entire life to serving our Lord. She became a Sunday school teacher, youth club leader and later a much valued part of our leadership team. She was extremely good at keeping us organised. She loved craftwork and this is evident in the boards around the school room which she updated on a regular basis. She also did the displays in Church and impressed Dorothy (our then president) so much that Jayne was invited to do a display for our main Annual Meeting and was so appreciated that she was asked to do others over the subsequent years.

During Covid we set up a Church WhatsApp group and every morning and evening



Jayne would send pictorial messages and Bible readings as messages of friendship.

Jayne suffered a lot with her illness but never imposed it on us. During this time her faith greatly increased. She took the Sunday morning service before she passed away and her faith shone through in the sacrament service which she led. Jayne was a great inspiration to us all showing immense bravery on her many visits to Christie Hospital. She touched so many lives with her kindness and concern. She will be sorely missed by all members and friends at Atherton I M Church and within the Connexion.

WELL DONE THOU GOOD
AND FAITHFUL SERVANT.



Risley: Ron Percival (25 December 1930 – 9 December 2025)

Ronald James Percival (known to all, simply, as Ron) has gone to glory aged 94. Ron was born and brought up in Fearnhead in Warrington, and lived there for the last few decades of his life too. But throughout his life, wherever he lived, he remained a faithful attendee at Risley I.M. church. Not long after returning from his National Service (mainly in Hong Kong) Ron became the Vice-President at Risley aged just 25 and just five years later, in 1960, stepped up to take on the role of President. He remained as the President at Risley for an astonishing 58 years.

If that sounds like a life of faithful and constant service, it doesn't begin to tell even half of the tale. Ron, supported by his beloved wife Lorna, served constantly and tirelessly in all manner of roles in the church: Sunday School teacher, preacher (in many other churches around the IM circuits in addition to Risley), teacher, chorister, organiser of church trips, holidays and social events as well as special Sundays in the church calendar. Ron took great joy especially in the Christmas, Easter and Men's Sunday services.

Outside of his church commitments, Ron was a Rugby League referee and touch judge and officiated at the Wembley Challenge Cup Final in 1976. He also served as a magistrate for fifteen years.

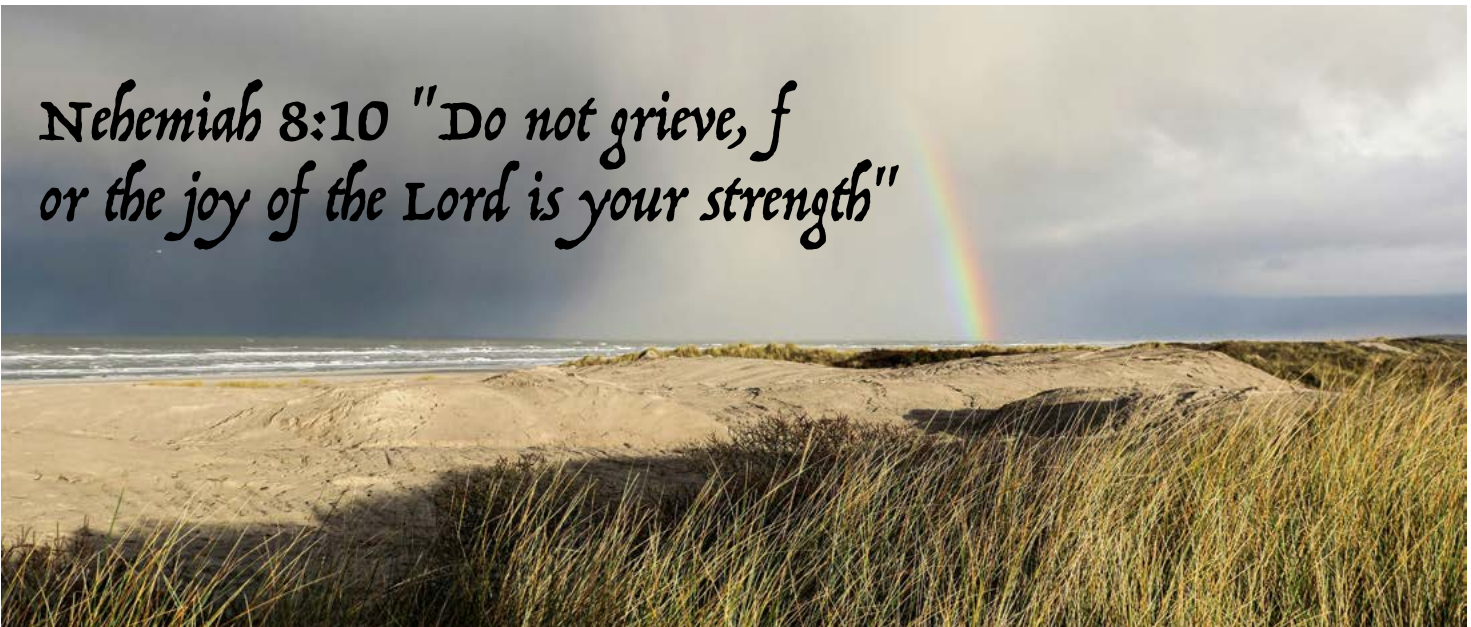
Since stepping back from his role as Risley's President in 2018, Ron continued to attend as often as his health allowed, and came to as many services and coffee mornings as he could. On his mobility scooter, he would still participate in Padgate Walking Day, the annual local walk of witness.

Ron will be missed by all his many friends around the IM churches and greatly missed at Risley, where we are sure that we will never quite grasp the amazing influence he has had on countless lives. We extend our deepest sympathy and condolence to all of Ron's family – especially his two surviving children Alison and Jeff, and to Ron's brother Alan. We were truly blessed to have Ron in our church – both at Risley and in the wider IM community.



South Hylton: Pauline Blyth (13 March 1954 – 29 November 2025)

A service of celebration and thanksgiving was held on 17th December 2025 as we thanked God for Pauline's life and love. She came to our church as a teenager, and committed her life to the Lord shortly afterwards, going on to become a Sunday School teacher, and being involved in many aspects of the fellowship's life. Her worth, smile and friendliness were appreciated by everyone. Pauline was very proud of her husband John's music, and supported son John Paul and daughter Emily's studies and careers.



After a difficult time with Alzheimer's, she died at Princess House, in Sunderland, aged 71 years. We do praise God for her, and a full church and crematorium gave grateful thanks for such a dearly loved lady. Our prayers continue for John and the family, as she is missed and remembered. May their happy memories bring blessings.

South Hylton: Doreen Storr (31 January 1942 – 17 December 2025)

Doreen's life was celebrated with her family and many friends and colleagues on 13th January 2026. We gave thanks for a loving, friendly, thoughtful and 'bubbly' lady as we worshipped together. It was good to remember her many years of teaching in Sunderland, and her active involvement in almost every area of church life. She carried out all duties willingly and diligently, especially enjoying working with the children, and taking part in our 'Bible Comes Alive' presentations each year.

Doreen was a member of the local WI group, and the South Hylton Local History Society, and enjoyed being busy! We remember her husband, Graham, and her daughters Janelle, Emma and Sarah, and their families before the Lord, praying that they will know His comfort and peace.

Thank you & God bless

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Easter Celebration

GOOD FRIDAY 3RD APRIL
AT 7 PM



EVENING OF PRAISE
IN MUSIC & WORD

A VERY WARM WELCOME TO ALL
OFFERING FOR LOCAL STOREHOUSE FOODBANK
REFRESHMENTS AND FELLOWSHIP

**“The LORD bless you and
keep you; the LORD make
his face shine on you and be
gracious to you; the LORD
turn his face toward you
and give you peace.”
-Numbers 6:24-26**