

Methodist reporter

*E-News from the St Albans and
Welwyn Methodist circuit*

ISSUE 209

October 2025

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

As we begin the new Connexional year, I would like to wish you all the best for the mission and ministry that you are involved in. I also pray that you and your loved ones may grow closer to God by seeking and reaching out to him. I have promised to write to you about my experiences of God and the world over the last four months.

During my sabbatical, I attended a **Spiritual Conversation** course with the London Jesuit Centre, and the Alpha leadership conference, which was held in the Royal Albert Hall. The Alpha conference attracted more than 5000 people from over 80 nations. The main focus of the conference was prayer and worship. Almost every session, from worship to the seminars, was inspiring and encouraging. There was a prayer team available throughout the day to meet with people in need of prayer. I looked around the auditorium and found people of all colour and race worshipping God with one voice, with the overwhelming gratitude for his love, made known to humanity, through the suffering of Christ on the cross. I was reminded of Jesus' prophecy made clear to us by John's Gospel chap 12. v32 "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." It was a wonderful sight to see people from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages standing before the throne of the Lamb of God and crying out and saying, "Worthy is the Lamb". The connecting force of all nations here was the blood of the Lamb who was crucified. This gathering brought me to a place of renewed commitment to proclaim Christ crucified. I was also challenged not to embrace the "Spirit of the age". It is our duty to keep our eyes focused on Jesus who was, and is and is to come. In this ever changing world, our duty is to follow God who never changes. One of the fascinating sessions was led by Arthur C Brooks who talked about finding success, happiness and deep purpose in the 'second half' of life. The striking line of his talk was to choose happiness over success. His book, *From Strength to Strength*, explains it all. Johannes Hartl, a German philosopher and theologian spoke on prayer. His book, *Simply Pray* is available on Amazon. To meet with God we do need to be present. When we come to pray, often our minds wander all over the place. While God is already present, our presence is often missing.

The **Spiritual Conversation** course (London Jesuit Centre) helped me greatly in my prayer life. In the method of Ignatius prayers, we do need to notice the distraction and name it (during prayer) and move on with our prayer time. We are encouraged to hear God in 'still small ways': through our emotions, insights and desires. God is both our destination and the one who helps us to navigate our journey. The Spirit of God helps us to read the signs and interpret them along the way.

The Ignatian way of proceeding involves reflecting on our lives, noticing our thoughts, feelings, moods, desires and actions, and then interpreting these in the light of our previous experience and what we believe about the way God is present in the world. This practice is known as the 'discernment of spirits'. It is important to discern our thoughts, feelings, desires and actions, because not all our thoughts and desires are from God. Some desires will lead us toward God and others will lead us away from God. Ignatius used the terms desolation and consolation as the guiding principles to discern the spirits, good and bad.



Desolation and Consolation. Ignatius defined consolation as “when some interior movement in the soul is caused, through which the soul comes to be inflamed with love of its Creator and Lord”. He defines desolation as the opposite of the soul being disturbed and agitated, “without hope, without love, when one finds oneself all lazy, tepid, sad and as if separated from his Creator and Lord”.

Both consolation and desolation play a vital role in our relationship with God.

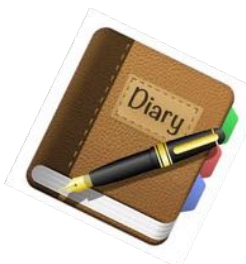
Consolation is like a green light and desolation an alarm sound, in our journey toward God. We as a church benefit greatly if we follow these methods in our decision makings. Walking with God demands our undivided attention in seeking the will of God and we can only do that if we are able to discern the spirits that are trying to lure us away from God. The course also included the skills practice of spiritual direction; how to listen well to the directee, while noticing what God is saying. My time with the Jesuit Centre has boosted my skills as a spiritual director.

Overall, these three months have been a gift from the Connexion and a blessing from God. I have been able to reflect a lot about my life and family, and the life of the churches I am serving. I was able to spend a ‘good amount of time’ in prayer and lot of reading. I met some wonderful people while I was in London for the Alpha conference and the retreat with the Jesuit Centre. There were many who came from all walks of life that shared their testimony of faith and the love they found in Jesus. I had plenty of opportunities to spend time with people of other nations during my sabbatical, in fellowship and sharing stories. My quality time with the family has been remarkably wonderful and we have joined other churches in St Albans on Sundays for worship. I have also managed to clear some junk from my study and our garage. This period has helped me greatly to get back into the routine of my devotional life. I praise God for this wonderful gift.

All Praise, Honour and Glory to God alone.

Amen

Rev J Daniel Yovan



Thinking Lunches: 12.30pm to 1.30pm. Marlborough Road MC

Thursday 2nd October **Maggie Dodd**, Live Longer Better Champion and Anna Chaplaincy Lead.

Thursday 6th November. **Sustainable St Albans**

How can we make a difference in our community?

Please bring your own lunch and drinks. Half an hour talk and then discussion.

FREE CHURCH SERVICES AT ST ALBANS ABBEY 11am ON WEDNESDAYS

1st October: Revd Stephen Heap, Baptist Minister

5th November: Doral Hayes from Churches Together in England

3rd December: Revd Lisa Kerry, Regional Minister Central Baptist Association

Funeral: Peter Hudson. Friday 3rd October 2025 at 12:30 pm at West Herts Crematorium. This will be followed by a Service of Thanksgiving for Peter's life and ministry at 2:15 pm at Marlborough Road Methodist Church, St Albans.

HOW DO I SEND SOMETHING FOR INCLUSION IN REPORTER?

Please send your articles to news@methodistreporter.org.uk

Copy must be received by the 20th of the month, for the following month's issue.

Please ensure you have permission from people (or young people's parents) for their picture to be published in Reporter.

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DOCUMENTS: Microsoft Word (.doc/docx). PICTURES: Jpeg

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Celebration Service for Stuart Johnson: 40 years as Local Preacher



Stuart receives a certificate of long service from Revd David Jebb, Superintendent and Revd Carl Howarth.

See [September Reporter](#) for more information:



Dear Friends,

I want to express my heartfelt thanks to everyone who helped make our Circuit Service such a special occasion, as we celebrated Stuart Johnson receiving his 40 Years of Preaching Certificate in the Methodist Church.

A heartfelt thank you to the wonderful team at Hatfield Road Methodist Church for hosting the service with such warmth and grace, and for the many thoughtful arrangements — from refreshments, screen and sound, and live streaming, to the welcome stewards, duty steward, and car park stewarding. Your tireless dedication ensured that everything flowed smoothly and meaningfully, creating a truly memorable occasion.

To the music group members and the organist: well done! Your contribution before, during, and after the service — from rehearsals to leading the worship and post-service songs — made the service uplifting and full of praise.

Thank you also to everyone who attended. It was wonderful to see all our churches in the Circuit represented, with over 100 people gathered together in worship. These services remind us of the strength of our fellowship, and we look forward to continuing to build on them in the future. I understand we have further milestones to celebrate in the coming year, with other Local Preachers reaching 40 and even 60 years of service — something we can truly give thanks for.

Finally, thank you, Stuart, for your faithful service to your living Saviour over these forty years. As Scripture reminds us: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news” (Romans 10:15).

With gratitude and every blessing, **David Jebb**

Around the Churches



On 13th September we had a very successful Barbecue organised by our Youth Group. They really excelled themselves with a vast variety of food and other goodies and everyone enjoyed themselves. Our thanks to them and to Patricia and Linda who oversaw the proceedings.

Richard Seddon

We held our Harvest Festival Service last - the 21st September - led by our Minister Rosemary. We had a large congregation and we all participated in the activities and the prayers of Intercession. We are truly blessed with having such a young fellowship which bodes well for the future. All proceeds went to the Hatfield Food Bank.

Richard



Marlborough Road Methodist Church

Thursday 2nd October 2025

Maggie Dodd, Live Longer Better Champion and Anna Chaplaincy Lead

How we can enable people to live better for longer, increasing healthy life expectancy and enjoying a better quality of life into older age.

Thursday 6th November 2025

Sustainable St Albans

How can we make a difference in our community?

From 12.30pm to 1.30pm. Please bring your own lunch and drinks. Half an hour talk and then discussion. Donations will be gratefully received to cover expenses and any profits will be given to the speaker for a charity of their choice.



Circuit News

LET'S PRAY TOGETHER ON SATURDAY MORNINGS

The Saturday morning prayer Zoom has become very popular, with around 20 – 25 people joining each week, from all round the Circuit and indeed from all round the world! The final September one was led by Michelle van Wyk from South Africa, and the leaders in October are:

4th Rev David Jebb; 13th, George Woods; 20th Jacqui Guy;
27th Michelle van Wyk.

Do join one Saturday. The link is available from the Circuit Office, and you will be very welcome.



A MESSAGE FROM THE ADULT LEARNING TEAM AT ST ALBANS ABBEY

As October invites reflection, we journey through powerful chapters of our shared past — from the legacy of Magna Carta and the shaping of justice, to the solemn remembrance of the Holocaust and the enduring lessons it carries. This month, we explore stories that ask us to think deeply, honour those who came before, and consider how history continues to shape the world we live in today.

Upcoming courses are

'Magna Carta 800: How 1215's Crisis became 1225's Constitution' on Thursday 9th October at 7.30pm.

'The Teacher of Auschwitz' on Monday 20th October at 7.30pm.

Full details can be found at by emailing: studycentre@stalbanscathedral.org

All are most welcome - we'd love to see you.

Caroline, Isabelle and Hillary

The Adult Learning Team

THE KNIFE ANGEL NATIONAL YOUTH ANTI-VIOLENCE TOUR

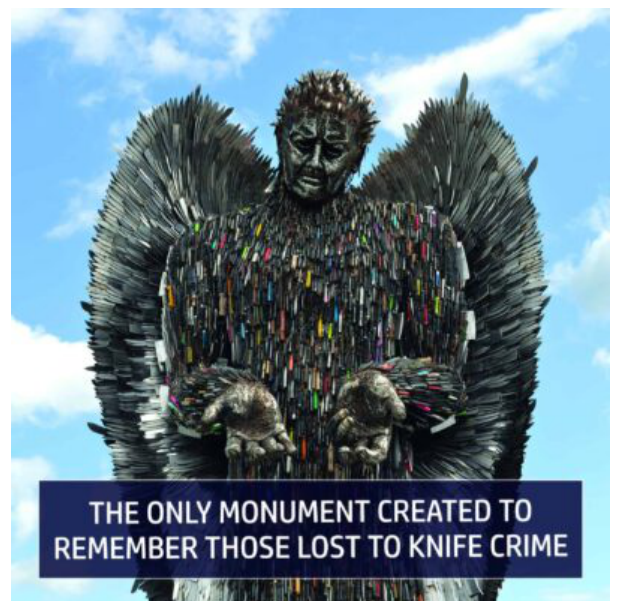
The sculpture, made from over 100,000 seized blades, was specifically created to highlight the negative effects of violent behaviour whilst solidifying our critical need for social change. Not only does the Angel act as a catalyst for turning the tide on violent and aggressive behaviour, but it also acts as a beautiful memorial designed to celebrate those lives who have been lost through these violent and thoughtless actions.

The Knife Angel will be in Welwyn Garden City town centre from 1st – 30th October.

Throughout the month, you'll find activities, workshops, and events in The Howard Centre and across the borough, all aimed at raising awareness of the impact of knife crime and promoting community safety.

This is a unique and thought-provoking experience to see an iconic national monument right here in our town centre and you can find out more at

<https://www.britishironworkcentre.co.uk/the-knife-angel-official/>





Praise in the Park, St Albans Sunday 24th August

The two St Albans Methodist Churches, The Church of God of Prophecy, and the Salvation Army came together for outdoor public worship, in St Albans, closing their buildings for the morning. Over 100 people attended, singing to the sound of the Salvation Army band. Prayers, bible readings, and the reflection were broadcast using a portable amplifier. The weather was glorious and many passersby paused and joined in. Several church



members took chairs and a picnic and continued in fellowship afterwards. It was agreed to do it all again on 23rd August 2026. All glory to God.

Daniel.

Rev J Daniel Yovan



Photos: Peter Wallace

A brief autobiography from John Sterland, new Circuit Steward:

Living in Shenley for 27 years with wife and 2 adult daughters. GP in London Colney, then police surgeon and occupational physician for last 24 years, I now spend one day per week at Watford General and Lister Hospitals.

Previously Church of England, I enjoy the small friendly Shenley Methodist Church here. Steward for the last few years, I renovated the old noticeboard, and refurbished the back garden rotten sleepers with recycled plastic blocks for seating messy church children, a major use of the building at present. I attend church council and St John's resources group at Potters Bar, and will be pleased to help in the wider circuit. I will be pleased to help at Digswell and Radlett and looking forward to visiting these churches.

