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FROM REV ROSEMARY MUTOPO
A FATHER'S HEART: LOVE THAT WATCHES AND WELCOMES
LUKE 15:11–32.

As June brings us to Father's Day on the 21st, we pause to give thanks for the fathers, grandfathers, and father figures who have shaped our lives with guidance, patience, and care. It is a time not only to celebrate them, but also to reflect on the deeper meaning of fatherhood as revealed in Scripture. One of the most powerful images of a father's love is found in the parable of the Prodigal Son in *Luke 15:11–32*. In this story, a son turns away, choosing his own path and squandering the inheritance he demanded from his father. Yet what stands out just as much as the son's return is the father's posture in the waiting.

Though not described in many words, we can picture the father day after day, watching the road, his heart turned toward the horizon. He never gave up hope. He never stopped looking. One can imagine him seated with his eyes fixed on the distance, longing for even the smallest sign of his son's return. And then, Scripture tells us, "while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him". This tells us something profound: the father had been watching.

When the son finally appears, the father does something extraordinary. He runs to meet him. He embraces him. He restores him. There is no hesitation, no rejection, only compassion, forgiveness, and joy. This is the heart of a loving father: one who waits, who watches, and who welcomes home.

A godly father reflects qualities that mirror the character of God, strength paired with gentleness, courage shaped by compassion, and steadfastness expressed through tenderness and care. Fatherhood is more than a role; it is a sacred trust. It is both a gift and a responsibility, a calling through which God's watchful, guiding love is made visible in the lives of others. On Father's Day, we are reminded that true fatherhood reflects this same spirit. It is not about perfection, but about presence. Not about control, but about compassion. Not about keeping score, but about offering grace. Fathers are called to be anchors of encouragement, steady sources of wisdom, and living examples of patience and forgiveness.

For many, this day is filled with gratitude and celebration. For others, it may carry mixed emotions, memories of loss, absence, or relationships still in need of healing. Wherever we find ourselves, the message of the Prodigal Son assures us that we are never beyond the reach of a loving Father. God's arms remain open, His eyes always watching the road, ready to welcome us home.

May this Father's Day be a time of reflection, appreciation, and renewal. Let us honour those who have reflected God's love in our lives, and be inspired to extend that same love to others freely, generously, and without condition.

Wishing you a blessed and peaceful Father's Day.

Rev'd Rosemary Mutopo

A PIECE OF HISTORY
LONDON TO SOUTHEND MAMMOTH WALK
24TH SEPTEMBER 1966

I was recently given a copy of a certificate, below, commemorating the London to Southend M.A.Y.C. Mammoth Walk which took place on the 24th September 1966 when seventy-three young people from Hertfordshire walked one thousand two hundred and twelve miles and raised £730.00, towards a total target of £21,000.00 to 'Make tomorrow's London'

Unfortunately , I do not have any other details of the event but I would be interested to know if any folk in your Circuit knew of the event in 1966, or other years, or indeed participated in such a 'Walk'. I look forward to receiving any details which you may be able to provide.

John Simpson Trinity M.C. Watford - indiabound81@outlook.com

(The writing on the certificate says that 73 young people of Hertfordshire walked 1,212 miles, and raised £730 towards 'Make Tomorrow's London'.)



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**PLENTY OF ROOM LEFT
FOR NEWS OF YOUR
CHURCH!
SEE PAGE 8 FOR HOW TO
SEND US ARTICLES.**

THANK YOU!

NEWS FROM THE CIRCUIT

PENTECOST PRAISE AT OXLEASE

On Sunday 24th May, our Circuit gathered at Oxlease for a joyful and Spirit-filled Pentecost Praise Celebration. This year's service was especially significant, as Pentecost Sunday coincided with Wesley Day (Aldersgate Sunday), making it a truly fitting occasion to celebrate both the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the Methodist heritage inspired by John Wesley. The account of the first Pentecost was read in seven different languages, and the Lord's Prayer was also shared in a variety of languages. These moving moments helped to bring to life the meaning of Pentecost and reminded all present of the richness and diversity of God's Church. Adding to this was the rhythmic sound of African drumbeats from members of the congregation, which truly lifted the praise and created a celebratory atmosphere. Everyone received a paper cut-out of a flame, on which we wrote a prayer, and these were displayed on flip charts around the church.

Another special moment was the presentation by David Jebb to local preacher, Peter Wallace, of a certificate signed by the President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference, in recognition of his 40 years of faithful preaching ministry. Peter's family were there to join in the celebrations.

After the service, the celebrations continued with warm fellowship and excellent hospitality. A delicious, cooked tea was prepared by the fantastic catering team from Oxlease, who are well known for their outstanding catering and welcoming spirit. Their efforts were greatly appreciated by all who attended.

It was truly a beautiful and spirit-filled occasion, giving thanks for the gift of the Holy Spirit and celebrating the life and witness of the Methodist Church.

We now look forward to our next Circuit service, planned for September, when we will celebrate



Thinking Lunch



A warm reminder that the "Thinking Lunch" will be held at Marlborough Road Methodist Church AL1 3XG on **Thursday 4th June, 2.30-1.30pm**

Speaker: Neil Kieran, SADC Principal Emergency Planning and Community Safety Officer: *How do we respond to a local emergency?* Bring your own lunch and drinks. Half an hour talk and then discussion. Donations gratefully received to cover expenses and any profits will be given to the speaker for a charity of their choice.

A MESSAGE FROM DAVID JEBB

From 13–15 May I attended the annual Connexional Superintendents' Conference, which this year brought together **over 150 Superintendents** from across the Connexion. The gathering offered space for worship, reflection, shared learning, and discussion around the ongoing challenges and opportunities facing our churches and circuits.

I have prepared a short-written summary of the key themes and conversations for those who would like further details, and a copy of this is available from the Circuit Office.



SATURDAY MORNING PRAYER

This gathering continues to grow from strength to strength. Each week, a faithful group meets on Zoom from **9 to 9:45am** to pray for our church, our country, our world, and for personal needs and concerns that people bring. It has become a precious time of stillness, encouragement, and spiritual strength.

Every Saturday, one of our leaders guides the first 15 minutes with a **song, a Bible reading, and a short reflection**, followed by open prayer. These prayers may be spoken aloud, offered in silence,

sung, or expressed in whatever way God inspires. We have found this time to be deeply comforting and spiritually healthy a reminder that we are not alone in our stresses, illnesses, brokenness, or sadness. Prayer brings healing, wholeness, and hope.

If you are able, **please do join us** on Saturday mornings at 9am via Zoom. The Zoom link will be circulated each Thursday by our Circuit Administrator, **Autumn Leung**, ahead of the coming Saturday. If you need a ZOOM link please do email: admin@midhertsmethodists.org.uk

An Exciting New Opportunity: Mission Outreach Enabler for St John's in Potters Bar & Shenley

St John's Methodist Church, Potters Bar, together with Shenley, is stepping boldly into a new chapter of mission and community missional engagement. As we continue to grow in faith, friendship, and service, we are delighted to introduce a brand-new part-time role that will help us deepen our reach and widen our welcome: **Mission Outreach Enabler**.

This new post reflects our shared commitment to living out the good news of Jesus in ways that are **practical, relational, and transformative**. Rooted in our values of compassion, inclusion, and hope, the Mission Outreach Enabler will help us strengthen our presence across both communities building bridges, nurturing relationships, developing disciples and creating opportunities for people to encounter God's love in everyday life.

Each week, our buildings host a rich variety of community groups, families, and individuals. The Mission Outreach Enabler will help us connect more intentionally with these groups, offering a warm Methodist welcome and opening doors to spiritual exploration, discipleship, and community flourishing. Working closely with church members and leaders, the postholder will help us see our neighbourhoods with fresh eyes and respond with fresh hope.

We are seeking someone with **a living Christian faith**, a heart for mission, and experience in community engagement or church-based outreach. Creativity, warmth, and a collaborative spirit will be essential as we continue to grow as a vibrant, outward-looking church family. From coordinating social and educational events to supporting faith-sharing initiatives, this role offers the chance to help shape a lively and life-giving ministry.

The post is supported by strong commitments to safeguarding, partnership working, and thoughtful communication including sensitive and effective use of digital platforms. With a supportive team, training opportunities, and a genuine desire to grow, St John's and Shenley offer a welcoming environment where the right person can make a real and lasting difference, helping to draw people closer to Christ and into the life of the church.

This is more than a job. It is an invitation to join us in writing the next chapter of our mission story—one shaped by faith, friendship, and the transforming love of God.

Applications are invited by Friday 3rd July. For application forms and full information pack, please contact: Autumn Leung, Circuit Administrator admin@midhertsmethodists.org.uk or call 01727 854211

Revd David Jebb

AROUND THE CHURCHES

SHENLEY PLANT SALE

Our annual Plant Sale attracted a full church of happy shoppers from across the village. Yvonne excelled this year with a wonderful array of lovingly home-grown plants, which were quickly snapped up as soon as the doors opened. Local craft stalls also added to the occasion.

The sunshine encouraged people to stay awhile and enjoy a chat over coffee, cream teas and delicious home-baked cakes.

A huge thank you goes to the fantastic team whose hard work made the event possible and helped raise over £940 for our church.

Heather Moir



CHRISTIAN AID ECUMENICAL SERVICE

On Sunday 10th May, Churches Together in Herts held an ecumenical service in St Saviour's Church, St Albans, as part of Christian Aid week.



AND IN OTHER NEWS.....



3GENERATE 2026

The 3Generate ROADSHOW

visiting your Church soon!

-  A group of last year's 3Gen participants will share their experience,
-  celebrate the lifelong, ever-unfolding journey of faith and encourage young people in our circuit to join them
-  'On The Way' to 3Generate 2026

DON'T MISS IT!

ON THE WAY

The poster features a group of four young people (three men and one woman) standing on a path, looking out over a landscape at sunset. A white arrow-shaped sign on a post points to the right with the text 'ON THE WAY'. The background is a vibrant green and yellow gradient.



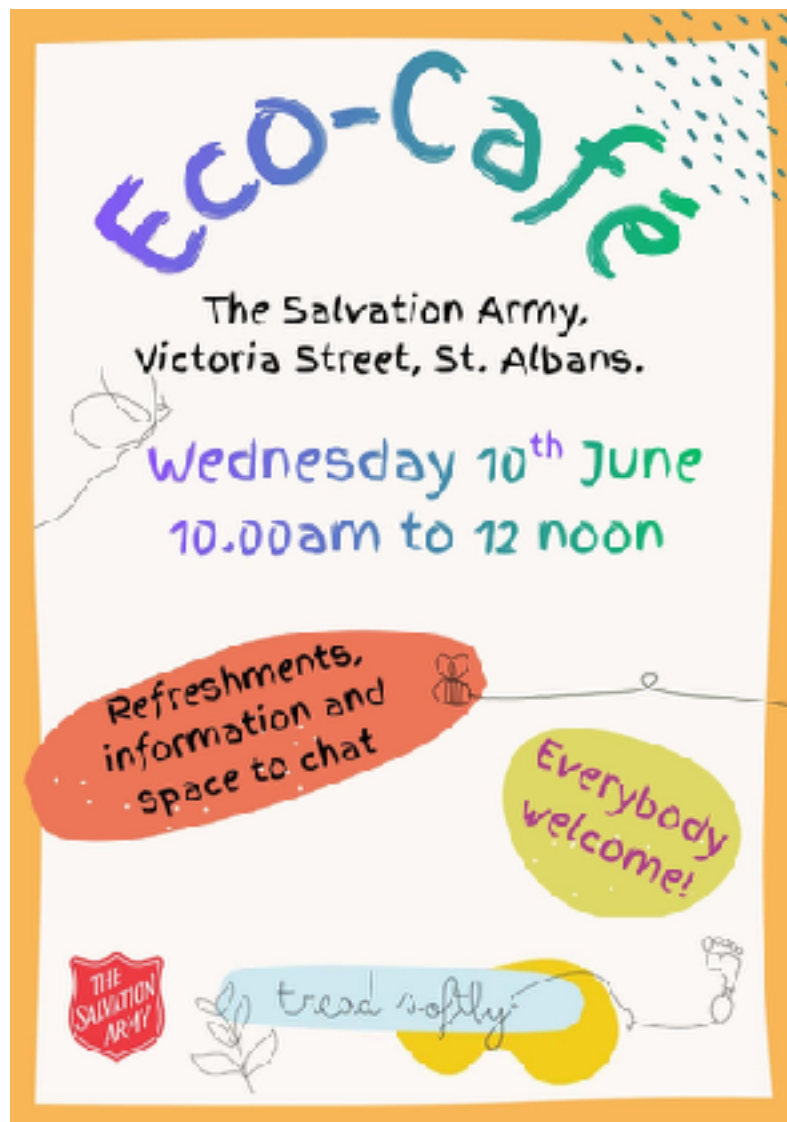
ST. ALBANS CATHEDRAL

Open daily, 9am - 5pm.
All are welcome.
www.stalbanscathedral.org/alban-day

ALBAN DAY: PILGRIMAGE & FESTIVAL
SATURDAY 20 JUNE

The poster shows a large crowd of people participating in a pilgrimage, with many carrying blue and red flags. The scene is set in a city street with buildings in the background.

Full details of this amazing day can be found at <https://www.stalbanscathedral.org/alban-pilgrimage>



AND FINALLY.....

HOW DO I TO 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.

Copy is acceptable only in the following file formats:

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

No scans of documents are acceptable, only the originals, please.

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