

Withington Methodist News

December 2022



SUNDAY WORSHIP

4th Dec - Promilla Jabeen, toy service
11th Dec 10.45am - Rev. Ian Coverdale, HC
11th Dec 4pm - Blue Christmas service, Rev. Caroline Wickens
18th Dec - Rev. Caroline Wickens, carol service
25th Dec 10am - Rev. Caroline Wickens, Christmas Day
1st Jan - Rev. Caroline Wickens

GREETINGS FROM CAROLINE

There is no room – this is where the Methodist church invites us to focus our reflections this Christmas. The words echo from the Christmas story, when there was no room for Mary and Joseph in the inn, so that their baby boy was laid in the animals' feeding trough.

But there is one big difference this Christmas. There is no room – and the 'no' is crossed out. We are invited to think about a real, dynamic alternative: there IS room. How does this change our thinking about our celebrations of Jesus' birth? Who is there room for?

How about 'you and me'? That's the starting point for all our reflection. It's so easy to feel that for one reason or another we are pushed to the edges, marginalised and excluded. We pile up worries about appearance, age, accent, education, or a thousand and one other things, and we end up feeling as though there is no room for us in a world where everyone else seems to belong. Many people need to hear that 'there is room for you and me' – whoever we are.

The Christmas story reminds us too that there is room for folk from every walk of life. The Magi are wealthy, able to give rich gifts. The shepherds are among the poorest of the poor, making their living as night watchmen protecting their employers' property. Mary and Joseph are homeless in Bethlehem, and are soon to be refugees with their newborn baby. There is room for everyone.

And the story reminds us that there is room for God. The heavens open up to make space for the angels to wheel in glory and sing hosanna. The star shines

bright on the manger and God is revealed in the baby boy who is named Emmanuel, God with us.

This Christmas, there is room for you, and for me, at Withington – room for us to meet God in the spaces that open up to reveal God's presence. Whether you want to rejoice at the carol service or share in quieter remembrance with Blue Christmas, there is room for you – and for me – in God's house.

Every blessing for Christmas,

Your minister Caroline

If you want to explore the church's resources further, this is the place to start:

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/there-is-room/>

PRAYER LIST

We remember in our prayers:

Ora and family,

Princetta and family,

Thandiwe,

Marguerite,

John,

Sarah,

the family and friends of Muriel,

the family and friends of Henry,

our friends who are no longer worshipping with us,

those members presently in care homes and unable to be with us in person,

all those friends still impacted by Covid-19

WITHINGTON BOOK CLUB

The next meeting of the Book Club will be on Monday 16th January, 7.30pm, when we will be discussing "The Ladies Midnight Swimming Club" by Faith Hogan.

Happy Christmas reading!

WORSHIP WITH US

December Services at Withington!

Advent is here! Here's a reminder of our Christmas services-

Sunday 4 December, 10.45am - Gift service

Sunday 11 December, 4pm 'Blue Christmas'

Sunday 18 December, 10.45am - Carol service

Sunday 25 December, 10am - Christmas morning service



Sunday Morning In Person Worship

Our Sunday Morning services are held at 10:45 in the downstairs hall.

Please enter the church via the back car park entrance. We have refreshments after the service and if you would like to help facilitate this, please let us know.

Reflections and written worship resources:

If you are not on email and would like to receive a printed copy of our weekly reflections or written worship resources for Sunday, please contact Caroline Wickens.

Wednesday Chat and Bible Study:

Now in person at Withington Methodist Church rather than on Zoom, we have a weekly Bible Study every Wednesday at 12:00 pm. All are welcome to join.

Manchester Circuit Sunday Evening Service

A warm welcome as ever to our worship tomorrow evening.

The Zoom platform will be open from 6pm for those who wish to catch up with others from their church, and as usual worship will begin at 6:30.

The joining details follow-

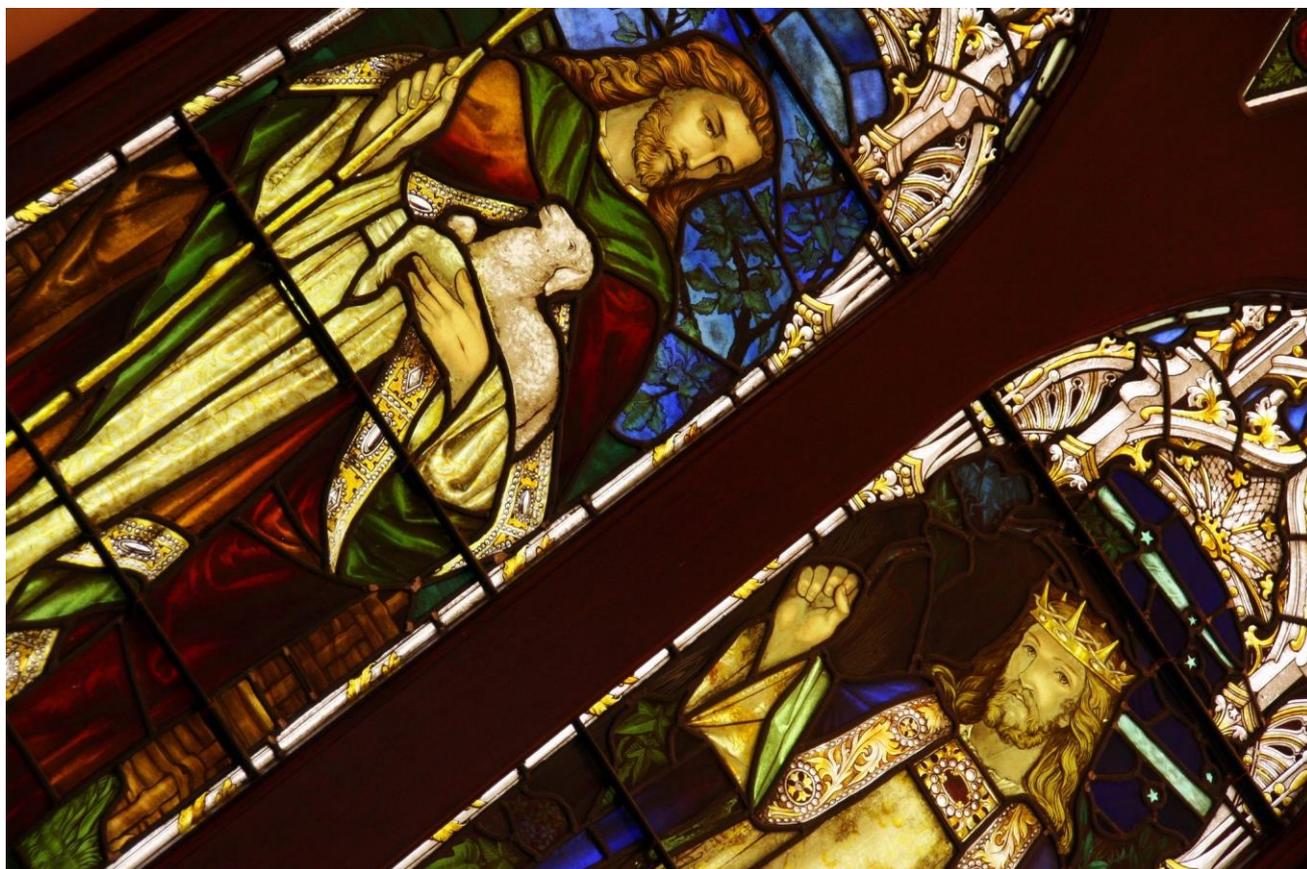
Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/92204599032?pwd=Tzg0SU9xcVZEZFNQK0FnYnNKWjlUQT09>

Meeting ID: 922 0459 9032

Passcode: 1901

One tap mobile + 12532158782, 92204599032 #, 1901#



NEWS FROM THE CONNEXION

18 NOVEMBER 2022

Responding to the Autumn budget

The headlines from this week's budget are that we are now in a recession and that average household disposable income faces a record drop of 7% over the next 2 years. However, in an unequal country like the UK averages figures often hide huge disparities. While middle income families face income reductions of between 0 and 5%, the poorest families lose most with the least well-off tenth seeing an eye watering drop of 17%. Only the wealthiest 10th of households are expected to see any rise in disposable income.

In the 6 months to September Trussell Trust foodbanks gave out 1.3 million food parcels – more than at any time in the Trust's history, even during the pandemic. Over 300,000 people turned to foodbanks for the first time including increasing numbers of working families. These numbers are expected continue to rise this winter as energy and food prices bite further into family finances. The budget did nothing to halt this increase. No further support was offered for this winter and the inevitable consequence is more families making their way to foodbanks.

As a response to this increasing need there are now over 2,000 churches including many Methodist Churches, offering a warm place to go for people whose homes may be cold this winter. They are called "Warm Welcomes" because there is an ambition to be much more than simply a place to huddle together for warmth. They aim to offer a space where people can contribute and be respected as the individuals made in the image of God, we know them to be - whether or not they have money for the pre-pay meter.

"Warm Welcomes" were conceived as an emergency response for this winter. All agree they should not be needed next winter, let alone become part of our social fabric as foodbanks have.

In April next year benefits will rise in line with inflation and Cost of Living payments will continue at a higher level. However, the support for energy prices will be reduced therefore the net effect is to marginally reduce the overall support for low-income families.

The result for the least well off, who got the worst of the austerity years and the sharp end of the pandemic, is no further help this winter and slowly falling support for next winter. There were worse options available to the Chancellor, such as cutting benefits or the unequal tax cuts of the ill-fated October budget, but we need to recognise that this option does nothing to stem what Trussell Trust has called a “Tsunami of Need”.

It does not have to be like this. The economy is taking a hit, but government and others have many ways of influencing which households bear the brunt. Over the next weeks and months churches alongside partners must make it clear that this scale of poverty exists in the UK and is unacceptable. It can be changed; it should be changed and if we work together to build public and political will it will be changed.

21 NOVEMBER 2022

The Revd Dr Brian E Beck (1933-2022), former President and Secretary of the Methodist Conference

It is with great sadness that Wesley House, Cambridge have announced the death of the Revd Dr Brian E Beck, former President and Secretary of the Methodist Conference.

Brian was educated at the City of London School, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, and Wesley House, Cambridge. Whilst at Cambridge he met and married Margaret Ludlow and together they had three children.

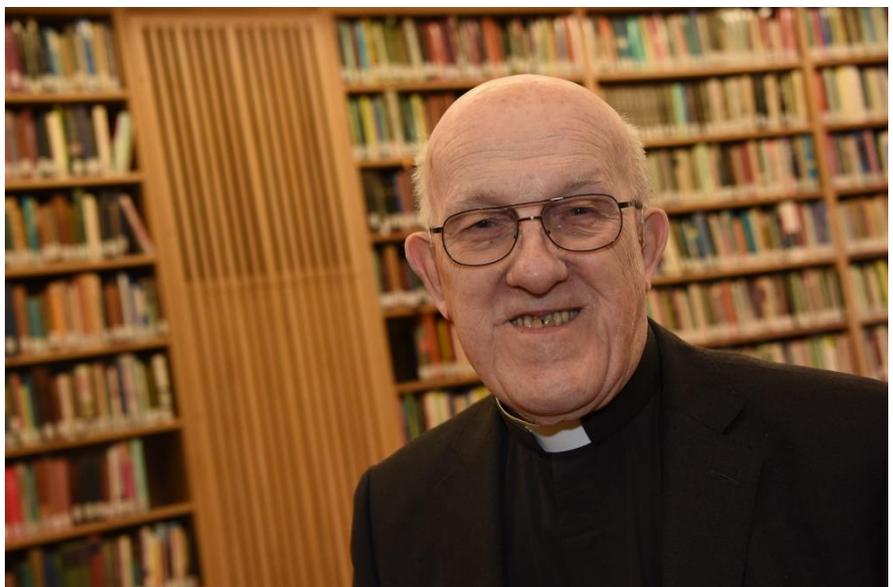
After his theological education at Wesley House, Brian was appointed Assistant Tutor at Handsworth College (1957-1959); he was ordained at the Methodist Conference of 1960 while serving as a circuit minister in Suffolk (1959-1962). He served on the staff of Saint Paul's United Theological College, Limuru, Kenya (1962-1968) during which time the Methodist Church in Kenya became autonomous from the British Methodist Conference. Brian was instrumental in drawing up the constitution and standing orders of the new church, many of which still stand, and he is fondly remembered in Kenya today. Only a couple of weeks ago Brian and Margaret

were recalling travelling to Kenya by boat through the Suez Canal, and then their journey home which involved packing their belongings and their children into a small Renault which they then drove from Nairobi to Cape Town!

On his return to Britain Brian was appointed Tutor at Wesley House where he taught the New Testament in the college and in the Faculty of Divinity of the University of Cambridge. He published two books on the New Testament: *Reading the New Testament Today* (1977 & 1992), and *Christian Character in the Gospel of Luke* (1989). In 1980 Brian became Principal of Wesley House before becoming the Secretary of the Methodist Conference in Britain in 1984 until his retirement in 1998.

From 1969 to 2007 Brian shared in the leadership of the international Oxford Institute of Methodist Theological Studies and during this time he deepened his own interest in Wesleyan theology, which, in retirement, he taught to Wesley House students. Many of his essays on Wesleyan and Methodist theology were collected into a volume published by Routledge in 2017 entitled, *Methodist Heritage and Identity*. He also published, *Exploring Methodism's Heritage, the Story of the Oxford Institute* (2004) and contributed to Ashgate's *Research Companion to World Methodism* (2013).

In 1993 Brian served as the President of the British Methodist Conference, chairing the difficult debate on human sexuality with great wisdom and patience, that resulted in the six resolutions that for more than 20 years held the church together across deep differences. In his letter to the Methodist people immediately afterwards, he wrote, "The Conference had been invited to adopt resolutions which took divergent views of the issues.... in the event, the Conference did not adopt any of those resolutions. Instead it adopted a pastoral rather than a legal



approach and decided to affirm both the traditional moral teaching of the Christian church, and the participation and ministry of lesbians and gay men in the church, while leaving decisions about particular cases to be taken by the appropriate committees against this background.”

In 1998, in the year he retired, Brian was awarded the Lambeth DD – a doctorate awarded to eminent and much-published scholars in the field of theology. He and Margaret retired to Cambridge where Brian continued to serve the connexion in a wide range of capacities, and lead worship in the circuit and in the college until January of this year when he preached his last service at Haslingfield, seventy years after he received his first note to preach. He was actively involved in college life, teaching Methodism, and on occasion, New Testament Greek. He looked after the college’s archive and rare books until this summer, only surrendering his keys after the college’s centenary celebrations in July as his health began to decline.

Brian’s spirituality was rooted in the hymns of Charles Wesley. Of Charles’ work, published as Hymns on the Lord’s Supper in 1745, Brian wrote in 2007 in the Epworth Review, “gratitude is due, not just for the book and its contents but, in the communion of saints, for the one who wrote it... who in the offering of his own poetic gifts exemplified his own words:

*Take my soul and body’s powers,
Take my memory, mind, and will,
All my goods, and all my hours,
All I know and all I feel,
All I think, and speak, and do;
Take my heart but make it new”.*

Brian also exemplified these words, offering his considerable powers of memory, mind and will, dry humour, kindness and wisdom to the church in the many offices he held, as a scholar, as a liturgist, as a preacher and as a teacher.

His choice of funeral hymn, (by Charles Wesley, of course), assures us, as his presence with us has for so long, that all is well:

*I rest beneath the Almighty’s shade,
My griefs expire, my troubles cease;*

*Thou, Lord, on whom my soul is stayed
Wilt keep me still in perfect peace.*

He died peacefully at home in Cambridge on 18 November in the 90th year of his age and the 66th year of his ministry.

Revd Dr Jonathan Hustler, Secretary of the Methodist Conference, commented, “Brian’s contribution to the life of the Methodist Church was immense. He will be sorely missed.

“His calm wisdom was a source of strength to many in the Church over the years; along with others who followed him in the offices that he held, I owe him a huge debt of gratitude for his kindness, his encouragement, and his guidance. It has been a privilege to count him and Margaret as friends and my prayers are with her at this sad time.”

Brian’s funeral will be held at Wesley Church, Cambridge at 1.30pm on Monday 19 December followed by cremation at Cambridge Crematorium for family and close friends.

The fund designated by Brian’s family for donations in his memory is the Brian E Beck Memorial Fund. This fund has been established to support the development and teaching of Methodist Theology to which Brian dedicated much of his scholarly life. It will be administered by Wesley House Cambridge where Brian belonged for more than 65 years. Donations can be made directly through this link: www.supportwesley.com/beck-memorial, or by cheque made payable to Wesley House Cambridge and sent to: Wesley House, Jesus Lane, Cambridge CB5 8BJ.

29 NOVEMBER 2022

Response to census showing people who identify as Christian is now 46.2% of the population

Faith leaders at the Methodist Church say they believe that while figures from the Office for National Statistics show fewer people in England and Wales describing themselves as Christian, this may not indicate a decline in

those seeking answers to questions around faith and spirituality.

The Census 2021 for England and Wales revealed that the number of people who identify as Christian was now 46.2% of the population, down from 59.3% in the last census of 2011.

The Methodist Church recognises the need to explore how Christianity can remain relevant in today's society and how it continues to spread the Good News in a changing world.

The President of the Methodist Conference, the Revd Graham Thompson, commented; "The figures may show a decline in the number of people identifying as Christian but experience suggests that more people are recognising that which is spiritual and are open to conversations about faith and the difference that faith can make. This is a space into which we can speak of our faith in Jesus and His call to love God and love our neighbours. The Methodist people seek to do this each day and we encourage others to try to do the same."

Graham's comments were supported by Trey Hall, the Methodist Church's Director of Evangelism & Growth, "It's important for the Church to be wide awake to changing demographics, cultural shifts and emerging social patterns in order to live in and serve the real world. Interestingly, as fewer people describe themselves with traditional religious identities, there seems to be an increasing interest in spirituality, especially among younger generations.

"The Church is being challenged to discover new forms and spaces for spiritual exploration and faith discovery with new friends and partners; to listen afresh, to love learning, to start and deepen new relationships in our communities.

"In the Methodist Church, we are committed to starting hundreds of New Places for New People, which may look very different from past spaces and forms of Christianity even as they integrate the wisdom of previous generations and explore it afresh. And that's a wonderful thing!"

THERE IS ROOM

The Revd Dr Paul Chilcote says ‘a wide embrace’ has always characterised Methodism and, taking our cue from Jesus, we make room for all.

One of the most exciting aspects of the time in which we live is the rediscovery of Christian practices and a renewed understanding of their purpose. Spiritual disciplines create openings in our lives where the grace, mercy and presence of God may be experienced. These practices are means of grace – safe spaces in which our loving God embraces us. Practices defined early Methodism. To use a more contemporary language, John Wesley laid out a ‘rule of life’ for the early Methodist people. He never viewed rules and regulations as an instrument of control, rather he conceived spiritual disciplines as instruments of liberation and empowerment. As in all other areas of Wesleyan theology, grace pervades these practices, and a wide range of works of piety and mercy shaped early Methodists as a people of grace and love. Ultimately, those practices in which they engaged became ways by which Methodists participated in God’s work of love, grace and shalom (peace) in the world.

Welcoming the stranger

The Wesleys invited their followers to engage with them in ‘the practice of making room for all’. Think about this as a critical Wesleyan practice that fuelled the Methodist movement. Was it a work of piety or a work of mercy? Actually it was both. To make room for others entails some serious interior work. It involves making space in your heart for those who may be different from you. It means asking God to change your attitudes and transform hostility into hospitality. It also involves exterior actions – opening your arms to those around you and offering compassion to those in need. It means asking God to teach us how to create a safe space for those who are outside, inviting them into the inner circle of our love. Given the pervasiveness of this practice among the people called Methodist over time, a ‘wide embrace’ has always characterised our tradition. The Wesleys most certainly exercised a ‘preferential option for the poor’, with many people from the margins

finding a home in the Methodist Societies. The Wesleys made room for all sorts of people in their burgeoning movement. There was room for all: rich and poor, educated and illiterate, women and men, black and white. Each generation of Methodists has taught this practice to the next generation. It is not too much to say that 'making room for all' is in our nature. Wesleyan theology provided the foundation for this practice of inclusion. Bishop Brent's well-known prayer identifies the origins of this hospitable spirit. The Lord Jesus "stretched out his arms of love on the hard wood of the cross that everyone might come within the reach of his saving embrace." Methodists make room for all because Jesus makes room for all. For the Wesleys, being ambassadors of reconciliation entailed reaching out, welcoming and embracing. They believed that, through this ministry of hospitality, the world comes to know that God is love.

Hospitality is part of holiness

The Wesleys viewed hospitality and inclusivity as critical practices in the quest for holiness. In fact, these are essential elements of holy living. This call to holiness has always been a central theme in Methodism. What makes holiness in the Wesleyan way unique, however, is its clear emphasis on a holiness of love: love of God and love of neighbour (all creation). Holiness is all about love. Holiness means restoration. Holiness means being like Christ. Holiness means radiance. The shining lives of God's restored children have a critical role in the unfolding of God's reign – to make room for all as a people of wide embrace. At the table of the Lord we see this practice of making room dramatically enacted in the worshipping community. In the sacrament of Holy Communion we live the parable of inclusion. We say, through our actions, that we want every person to know to the very fibre of their being that they are welcome. One of Jesus' most consistent practices was eating with new people in new ways. More often than not, this included those who were excluded and oppressed. Charles Wesley perceived the connection between inclusion and our family meal: "Come to the Supper come ... Every soul may be his guest" (Hymns on the Lord's Supper, VIII). As we engage in the Wesleyan practice of making room for all and celebrate around the table, we capture a glimpse of God's beloved community in which all are welcomed and all are loved.

How is Withington Methodist making Room for All?

On Thursday we finally had the first meeting of a Youth Group after over a year in the planning stage, and it was so good to open our doors to some local youngsters who have been finding little on offer to keep them from wandering the streets in our area. It is a liaison between the Council, Southway Housing and the Police and has a budget to see the project through til next June in the first instance. One young boy played table tennis for nearly 2 hours!

THERE IS ROOM

The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

In days to come
the mountain of the Lord's house
shall be established as the highest of the mountains
and shall be raised above the hills;
all the nations shall stream to it.

Many peoples shall come and say,
"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
to the house of the God of Jacob,
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths."

For out of Zion shall go forth instruction
and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

He shall judge between the nations
and shall arbitrate for many peoples;
they shall beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation;
neither shall they learn war any more.

O house of Jacob,
come, let us walk
in the light of the Lord!



Isaiah 2: 1-5

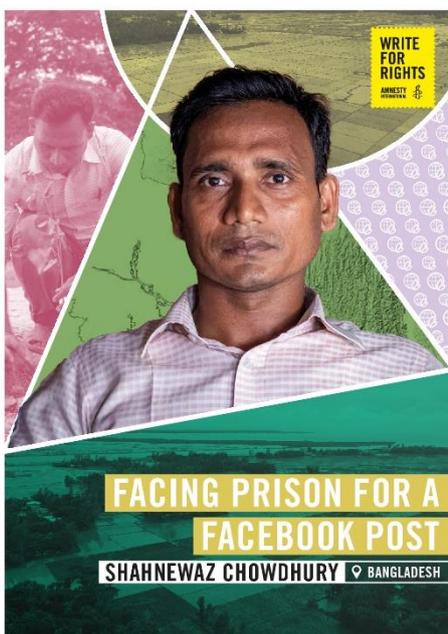
WRITE FOR RIGHTS 2022

As part of our Advent preparations we will again be thinking about prisoners of conscience. Amnesty International campaigns to protect people when they've taken a stand for justice, fairness, freedom and truth. Every year in its Write for Rights campaign, Amnesty asks people to send messages of hope to people whose rights have been abused.

The 2022 campaign focuses on the right to protest. Throughout history, people coming together to demonstrate against injustice have changed the world for the better, from stopping wars to acting against racism. Protest is powerful, but this precious right is under attack globally from politicians, governments and regimes who fear change and accountability. The people featured in Write for Rights 2022 know this only too well: they were all punished for using their right to protest. But your messages can bring about real change, pressuring authorities to free prisoners and protect the vulnerable. They also provide comfort and support for those who are doing the difficult and often dangerous work of speaking out for human rights.

This Advent, after the morning service on 4 December, we are all able to join together once more to sign cards to go to each of the following very brave people:

BANGLADESH - Shahnewaz Chowdhury



On 26 May 2021, Shahnewaz Chowdhury's village was battered by a powerful storm. Heavy rains and fierce winds destroyed a number of homes. In response, he wrote a Facebook post about the impact of a local power plant, linking it to the environmental destruction in his region, Banshkhali. He also urged young people in the area to 'resist injustice and support development' by speaking out. The next day, the power plant company filed a case against Shahnewaz, accusing him of posting false information on social media. He was arrested and then detained in inhumane conditions for 80

days without trial. A passionate writer and keen cricket fan, Shahnewaz was eventually granted bail on 16 August 2021, but if convicted, he faces the prospect of many years in prison, simply for posting on Facebook.

‘Environmental and human rights activists are not enemies of anyone. They are friends of...nature and people... For simply sharing my opinion, I have been treated like a criminal.’ Shahnewaz Chowdhury

CAMEROON - Dorgelesse Nguessan

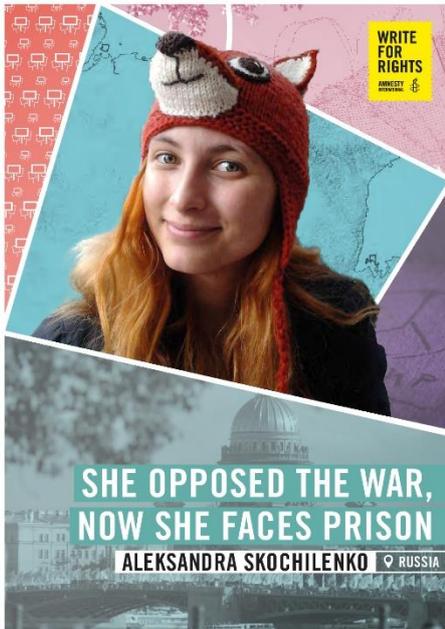
Two years ago, Dorgelesse Nguessan was busy running her hairdressing business and supporting her family. Although she'd never been politically active, concerns about the state of the economy prompted her to join her first ever protest, a peaceful demonstration in the city of Douala on 22 September 2020. Security forces fired rubber bullets, tear gas and water cannons to disperse protesters. As Dorgelesse turned into an alleyway, police followed her and fellow protesters, blocking them in. She was arrested, taken to a police station and held in a cell with 22 other people and only one bed. Dorgelesse was subsequently charged with



‘insurrection, assembly, meetings and public demonstrations’ and sentenced to five years in jail. She is now in Douala Central Prison. The breadwinner of her family, Dorgelesse has an 18-year-old son with sickle cell anaemia – because she is behind bars, her relatives are struggling to pay for his medication.

‘Everything was falling apart. Life was getting more and more expensive. And my “livelihood” wasn’t making any money. I said, “Well, if my voice can help inspire actual change in my country, why not?” That was what motivated me.’
Dorgelesse Nguessan

RUSSIA - Aleksandra Skochilenko

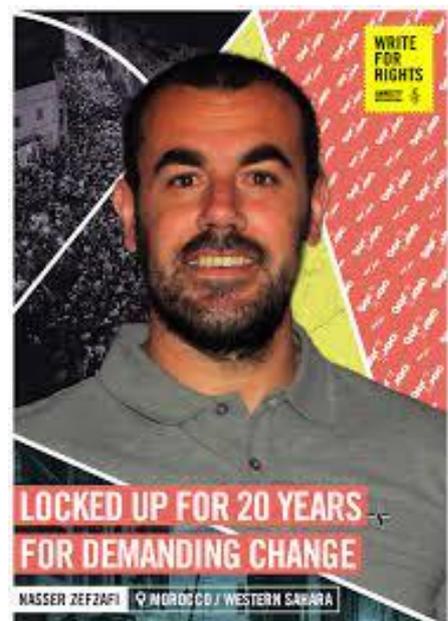


Artist and musician Aleksandra Skochilenko decided to protest peacefully against Russia's invasion of Ukraine. On 31 March this year, she replaced price tags in a local supermarket in St Petersburg with small paper labels containing facts about the invasion. Within two weeks she was behind bars. In the early morning of 11 April, Aleksandra was arrested by the police and charged with 'public dissemination of knowingly false information about the use of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation'. This is a new part of the criminal code hastily introduced by the government the previous month in an

attempt to stop Russians from criticising the invasion of Ukraine. Dozens of people have already been detained under it. Aleksandra (Sasha for short) has been detained in appalling conditions ever since. She has coeliac disease and has been forced to go hungry for most of the time because the authorities have not given her the gluten-free food she needs. Aleksandra has also been harassed by detention centre staff and her cellmates. If convicted, she faces up to ten years in prison.

MOROCCO / WESTERN SAHARA - Nasser Zefzafi

Nasser Zefzafi was living peacefully with his family in Rif, a region long marginalised by the Moroccan government, when peaceful protests broke out in his home town in 2016. They were sparked by the death of a fishmonger, who was crushed by a rubbish truck as he tried to recover fish confiscated by the authorities. Millions marched peacefully to express their sadness and frustration and demand change. The Hirak El-Rif movement was born and Nasser, a firm believer in justice and equality, became a prominent figure in it. The security forces subsequently arrested



hundreds of protesters. In May 2017, Nasser was arrested for interrupting a sermon at a mosque and accusing the imam of acting as a mouthpiece for the authorities. After being tortured and ill-treated in police custody, he was sentenced to 20 years in prison in June 2018. He was held in solitary confinement until 31 August 2018. Prison conditions have badly affected his health: he suffers from nerve pain and respiratory and eyesight problems, but the authorities have denied him the necessary medical care.

THIS WINTER

Your voice is powerful

Send a message for human rights



**WRITE
FOR
RIGHTS**



What news of the people we wrote to and prayed for this time last year?:

THAILAND

A leading voice in Thailand's democracy movement, student Panusaya ('Rung') Sithijirawattanakul was jailed for 60 days under the draconian lèse-majesté law. She faces trial, and could be imprisoned for life. Amnesty has called on the authorities to immediately drop the criminal proceedings against her and others charged solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of assembly and expression.

BELARUS

Teenager Mikita Zalatarou was waiting for a bus when the police moved in on a nearby, and largely peaceful, protest about the recent presidential election. As the crowd started to run, someone told Mikita to run too, so he did. The next day police officers came to his home and arrested him, beating him and accusing him of throwing Molotov cocktails at two police officers the night before. He was convicted of mass disorder and use of explosives and is now serving five years in a child education prison colony.

NIGERIA

When young people took to Nigeria's streets in October 2020 to protest against a notoriously violent police unit, Imoleayo Adeyeun Michael joined them. Now he is being tried on trumped up charges and faces the prospect of a long spell behind bars. Amnesty is calling for the charges to be dropped immediately. 'I sincerely appreciate all who have been supportive... and Amnesty Nigeria who stretched out arms of love towards me,' says Imoleayo Adeyeun.

MEXICO

Wendy Andrea Galarza Herrera believes helping to raise young children is the best way to create a fairer world. It is a goal she works hard for in Mexico, where women are often abused and killed simply because they are women. Wendy was shot by the police during a peaceful protest in 2020 and no one has been brought to justice. Amnesty International continues to campaign for justice and reparations for Wendy.

CHURCH NEWS

Toy Service

On Sunday morning, 4th Dec, we would be grateful to receive donations of toys during our annual Toy Service. This year we are again supporting our local women's refuge.

There are currently 8 mothers we are hoping to support at the refuge. If you would like to provide a toy for one of their children, the ages to buy for are- 2, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14 and 19.

They are most appreciative of our support and value the generosity they have received from WMC in past years.

Contact Centre

Many of you may not be aware our Saturday Centre has just passed its 30th Anniversary! Started by Doreen Newton in September 1992 we have had innumerable families through our doors, allowing children to meet a non resident family member for up to 2 hours in a warm, friendly, stimulating environment. We have rarely missed a Saturday over the years although Covid meant we had to stop for a while, during which there was a consequent drop in the number of volunteers to run it. This means we have now switched to fortnightly morning sessions from the previous weekly afternoon times. There are no other Centres running anywhere in our locality and we are very busy. We have had a pleasing influx of new volunteers though we are always canvassing to recruit more as they can move on quite rapidly for all sorts of reasons.

We hope to enjoy some celebration early next year and will post more information about what we do in another edition of this magazine.

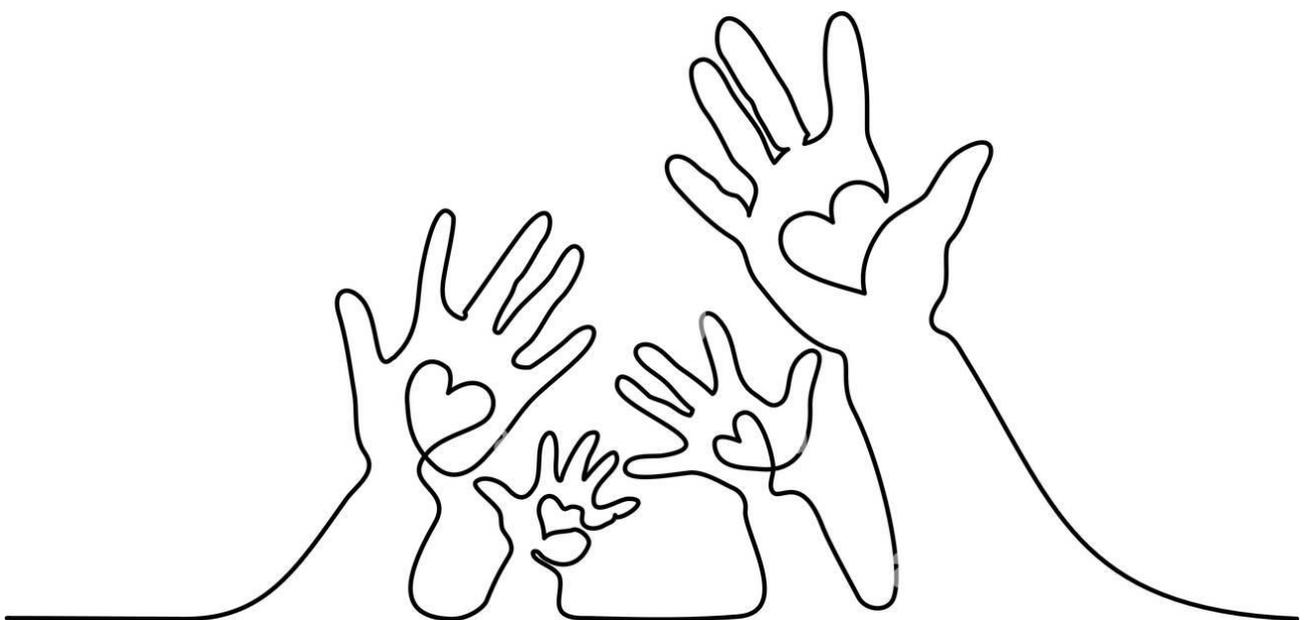


FAMILY NEWS

We have been very sad to learn of the deaths of Stasi Ionnides and Glyn Parry. Stasi was a member of the Greek Orthodox Church but his wife, Ora, has been a very longstanding member first at Ladybarn and now Withington. Glyn also worshipped here for a very long time and held many positions in the life of the church. Gaynor, his wife, died last year and her funeral was held at Withington; Glyn's funeral will also take place here - on Friday 16th Dec at 10,30 followed by cremation at Manchester Crematorium at 12 noon.

Some members have been very active recently and we really appreciate their help: Jenny has produced some spectacular floral displays and Elycia has crafted a lovely Advent ring. Nick has designed a poster advertising our December services and Davide has mended the electronic piano. And if you come into the ground floor hall you will see a Christmas tree adorned with lovely wooden nativity figures beautifully coloured by Jasibe, Daniel and Nadia. A volunteer with Assist exclaimed it was 'the most beautiful tree I've seen!' A special thanks to you all.

And another piece of good news - Thandi and Peter have received a letter from the Home Office allowing them leave to remain in this country after 8 years as Asylum seekers. We pray this will open new chapters in their lives as they can finally feel they belong here.



THANK YOU FOR READING!

THE CHRISTMAS CHECKLIST

FOR CHURCHES



DIG OUT THE CRIB FIGURES



DECORATE THE TREE AND CHURCH



CHOOSE PEOPLE TO READ THE LESSONS



MAKE SURE THE CHOIR IS READY



DELIVER THE CHRISTMAS PUBLICITY LEAFLETS



CLEAN EVERYWHERE



DECIDE WHICH CLERGY DO WHICH SERVICES



BUY PRESENTS FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVE WORKED HARD



CARRY IN EXTRA CHAIRS



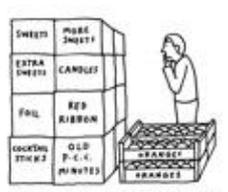
REHEARSE THE NATIVITY PLAY



WRITE ALL OF THE SERMONS



PREPARE THE CANDLES



MAKE THE CHRISTINGLES



COPY THE ORDERS OF SERVICE



ORDER SUPPLIES FOR VICAR'S POST-CHRISTMAS BREAK

CartoonChurch.com

The next magazine will be out on the 1st January on the **Withington Methodist Church Facebook Group** and via email.

If you have anything you would like to contribute to next month's magazine please pass it on to Caroline Fielding - withingtonmethodistnews@gmail.com

If you would like to receive an emailed copy of the magazine please email - withingtonmethodistnews@gmail.com

Withington Methodist Church

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Sunday Services

Morning Worship : 10:45 am taking place in the ground floor hall. Holy Communion once a month.

Regular Activities

Monday Monkeys (Mondays 10:00 - 11:30am)
Kundalini Yoga (7:00 - 8:30pm)
Brownies (Wednesdays from Oct. 6:45 - 8:15pm)
Snooker Group (Fridays 1:00 - 3:00pm)

