# Withington Methodist News

October 2025



# SUNDAY WORSHIP

Sunday 5th October: Local Arrangement, Harvest Festival

Sunday 12th October: Rev. Catharine Hughes, HC

Sunday 19th October: Deacon Jenny Jones

Sunday 26th October: Rev. Dr. Joanne Cox-Darling, joined by

Levenshulme

Sunday 2nd November: Ms. Eva Manley

# GREETINGS FROM CATHARINE

Dear friends,

"So come on, get it on
I don't know what you're waiting for
Your time is coming don't be late, hey hey
So come on
See the light on your face
Let it shine
Just let it shine
Let it shine"

Recognise the lyrics?

The other day I caught a reel of Miranda Hart dancing along to 'Shine' by Take That and was reminded of the joy of the song. In essence it's saying don't feel bad about yourself: your time is coming. 'See the light on your face: let it shine!'

Then yesterday I saw the Great British Bake Off presenter Alison Hammond being challenged to complete the lines of some 'Assembly bangers' (i.e. songs we all sang at school). The prompt was 'This little light of mine...' She joyfully

completed the chorus."I'm gonna let it shine!"

As October marches on, and the days get shorter and darker, it can feel as if all that is happening is heavy, cold and wet. We lose the light-headed joy of summer days and become tied down with the long drag towards Christmas. Work, meetings, responsibilities, deadlines. Busy-ness fills our days, and at the end we just don't want to go out and do anything. We begin hunkering down ready for the winter.

But even in the darkness there is hope in the light. Part of the reason Strictly Come Dancing is such a success is that it brings glitter and sparkle; a blessed relief from the troubles of the world around us. Though we may grumble about how early the shops prepare for the festive season, nevertheless there are fairy lights and candles to bring joy as we wander past (or wander in...).

We, too, can be a light to those around us. Jesus said, 'Let you light shine before others': a simple command to let all that is good and pure within you be a beacon to those you meet. Indeed, Jesus explained this was, 'that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.' [Matthew 5.16] We all have a light worth shining, as we allow the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts and bring a smile to our faces. We can dance like Miranda, or sing joyfully like Alison, or simply share the love of Christ with those we meet. In so-doing we glorify God.

And perhaps we can all join together in singing the final bridge of 'Shine' in praise to the God who knows and loves us, inside and out, and wants us to shine.

Hey! Let me know ya You're all that matters to me Hey! Let me show ya You're all that matters to me...

#### Catharine

PS: Want to let your hair down, sing at the top of your voice and dance around the kitchen (throw in some air guitar and funky moves)? Here's a YouTube link to the song: <a href="https://youtu.be/867repJu5-s?si=K2fFelTVplqPEV3Q">https://youtu.be/867repJu5-s?si=K2fFelTVplqPEV3Q</a>

# **PRAYER LIST**

# We remember in our prayers:

All those caught up in conflict around the world: Israel, Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan, Yemen, Somalia, Syria, and those facing persecution,

Janice

Stella,

Marlene's son,

Esther,

Thandiwe and Peter,

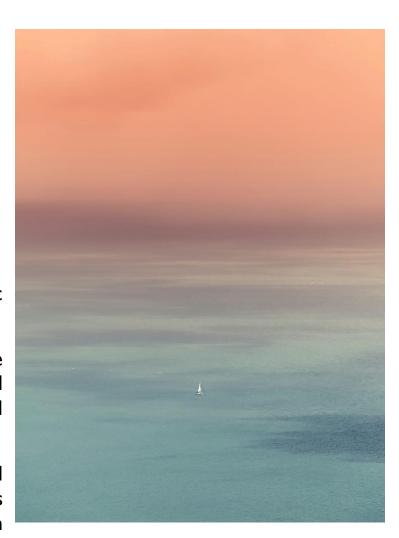
Lynne and Elycia,

Lottie,

the family and friends of Eric Leary,

all those here who are struggling to pay their bills and facing long waits for hospital appointments,

all those friends still impacted by Covid-19, those members and friends unable to be with us



# **WORSHIP WITH US**

# 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.

# 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.

To receive the joining details, please email administrator@manchestermethodists.org.uk



## **News from the Connexion**

# 15 SEPTEMBER 2025

#### New Methodist Youth President Welcomed

The new Methodist Youth President, Genesis Padgett (them/they), aged 19, was welcomed to their new role with a service at their home church, Emmanuel Methodist Church in Barnsley on Sunday morning, 14 September. Also attending were the President of the Methodist Conference, the Revd Richard Andrew, and the Vice-President, Matthew Forsyth, along with family and friends of Genesis.

The Methodist Youth President is a salaried position working full-time for one year to serve the children and young people of the Methodist Church in Britain. The role involves meeting and representing the young Methodist people to ensure that their voices are heard and to help them be involved in every aspect of Church life.

Genesis Padgett was elected by children and young people from across the Methodist Church last year and serves as the Youth President from I September 2025 to 31 August 2026.

Genesis is a member of Emmanuel Methodist Church in Barnsley and has been attending a Methodist church since they were three.



"I applied for the role of Youth President because I'm passionate about making sure all young people in the Church are heard and valued. I have seen firsthand how much creativity, energy and faith our youth have. I really want to keep experiencing that and keep guiding everyone to encourage this in all aspects of Church life," says Genesis. "I am so excited and just a tiny bit nervous about taking on this role. It is such a privilege to represent all young people from around the Connexion. I am ready to listen, learn and really get involved with as many events as possible."

"I felt so encouraged by all the support I received at my welcome service, seeing so many people gathered, supporting and praying for me reminded me that I am not in this alone," continued Genesis. "It has given me so much energy and excitement to start this new journey. I am really looking forward to meeting young people, hearing their stories, and learning about what matters most to them."

Bea Hulme, the outgoing Methodist Youth President, welcomed Genesis saying, "It's been a lovely few weeks passing on the role to Genesis, I'm excited to see what they will do with the position. I pray they have an amazing year and enjoy their time representing young people."

The President and Vice President of Conference, the Revd Richard Andrew and Matthew Forsyth, expressed their excitement at the prospect of working together with Genesis. They commented, "We are looking forward to working with Genesis as we encourage the Connexion to tell its story and sing its song. Genesis



has many gifts which will be a real blessing to the Methodist Church during their year of office. We will both be holding Genesis in our prayers."

Victoria Loveday, Children's & Youth Co-ordinator for the Sheffield Methodist District, commented, "Congratulations, Genesis, on stepping into this new role as Youth President! Your skills, dedication and leadership qualities make you the perfect fit for this position. I have no doubt you'll bring a fresh perspective and bring much success in everything you do. I wish you all the best as you take on this exciting chapter — I'm sure you'll smash it."

The Revd Lyn Gregg, Barnsley Methodist Circuit Superintendent, commented, "On behalf of everyone in the Barnsley Circuit, I would like to congratulate Genesis on their appointment as the new Youth President. We wish them every success in their new role and will continue to hold them and all our young people in prayer."

Genesis' first big event will be 3Generate, held at the NEC in Birmingham 3-5 October, where they will be hosting over 1,600 Methodist children and young people. They then travel to South Africa in November to meet young Methodists there, before beginning their travels around the UK to meet and to hear the voices of children and young people here.

### **23 SEPTEMBER 2025**

# UK Recognition of Palestinian Statehood: A Step Towards Justice and Peace

A statement from: The Revd Richard Andrew and Matthew Forsyth, the President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference and The Revd Dr John Bradbury, the General Secretary of the United Reformed Church

The UK Prime Minister, Sir Keir Starmer, has formally announced the UK's recognition of the State of Palestine.

This marks a significant and welcome shift in British foreign policy, moving away from using recognition as leverage in negotiations, and instead affirming the Palestinians' inherent right to self-determination and equal participation in peace talks.

This decision, in line with similar moves by other nations, increases international pressure on Israel over its occupation policies and the ongoing crisis in Gaza, which many experts, including most recently, the United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, have described as genocide.

Critics, including the Israeli government, argue that this recognition rewards terrorism and undermines peace. However, the Prime Minister made it clear

that Hamas must have no role in any future government. Importantly, millions of Palestinians have resisted occupation through non-violent means for generations - this recognition is a long-overdue acknowledgment of their peaceful struggle.

We welcome this new stance by the British Government and urge it not only to recognise Palestinian statehood but also to use every diplomatic channel to secure an immediate ceasefire, humanitarian access, and a renewed commitment to a just peace.

# **24 SEPTEMBER 2025**

# Christian leaders express concerns about community cohesion

Methodist leaders, including the President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference, have joined with those from other church traditions to sign a letter expressing concerns about movements that seek to inflame societal division:



We are deeply concerned about the co-opting of Christian symbols, particularly the cross, during Saturday's 'Unite the Kingdom' rally. Many individuals and communities felt anxious, unsettled and even threatened by aspects of the march.

There were undoubtedly diverse motivations for those engaged in the event. We respect the right to free speech, to hold different views on issues such as immigration, the importance of healthy debate between religious communities and the need to disagree well when consensus is difficult.

We also understand that for many of those involved in the rally there is a deep sense of frustration at feeling unheard and forgotten in the democratic process. We know that we cannot heal this wound unless the Church, and society as a whole rises to do more to address the issues of poverty, inequality and exclusion.

However, this rally included racist, anti-Muslim and far right elements. As Christians from different theological and political backgrounds we stand together against the misuse of Christianity. The cross is the ultimate sign of sacrifice for the other. Jesus calls us to love both our neighbours and our enemies and to welcome the stranger. Any co-opting or corrupting of the Christian faith to exclude others is unacceptable.

As Christian leaders we are proud of our country and commit ourselves to work with others building a more United Kingdom where the values of love, humility and compassion shine through in every community; and we do so unapologetically in the name of Jesus Christ.

# **25 SEPTEMBER 2025**

# All Are Welcome - Responding to unrest in song

With tensions rising in communities across the UK, the Methodist Church has released a new recording of the hymn 'Let us build a house where love can dwell', known to many as 'All Are Welcome'. More than 140 Methodist churches contributed their voices to the project.

The hymn is intended as a response to the recent protests in London, the disorder outside the accommodation of those seeking asylum and the 'Raise the Colours' campaign that have all led to a growing sense of intimidation. Crosses and other Christian symbols have even been seen at some demonstrations where they have been used to communicate hate rather than love.

Ben Lawrence, Digital Content Producer at the Methodist Church, who wrote the arrangement and produced the recording, commented, "Many people have been made to feel, not just unwelcome, but frightened and intimidated by what is happening. We want this to be a song of reassurance,

friendship and understanding."

"When we posted the invitation for churches to record their contribution we were staggered by the response," continued Ben. "Within 48 hours of making the ask, over 100 church groups had sent in their recordings, illustrating the strength of feeling held by many when faced with intimidation in their communities."

"The Methodist Church proclaims itself to be inclusive and justice-seeking," said the Revd Jonathan Hustler, Secretary of the Methodist Conference. "We believe that the Church has been called into being to proclaim that God's love is indiscriminate and unbounded, and which seeks to become a sign of God's reign from which no one is excluded and in which no one is devalued."



'Let us build a house where love can dwell' was written by the American Lutheran composer Marty Haugen for the opening of a church building. Published in 1997, it has become widely used as a hymn of gathering.

It is hoped that Methodist Churches and those Christian groups will play and share the hymn in the coming weeks to reassure everyone in their communities that all truly are welcome. You can listen to the arrangement on YouTube here - All Are Welcome

### **02 OCTOBER 2025**

# Manchester Synagogue Attack

The President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference and local

Methodists have responded with prayers, sadness and solidarity to this morning's attack at a Manchester synagogue.

The President and Vice-President expressed their shock at the terror attack at the Heaton Park Hebrew Congregation.

The President said, "This is terrible and shocking news especially on such a holy day for the Jewish community. We pray with those who mourn and reaffirm our commitment to overcoming division in our communities. Antisemitism must be named for what it is, a sin against God, and I encourage the Methodist people to reach out to our Jewish neighbours with words of prayer, support and condolence."

Holy God, who breaks down the walls of division,

we cry out to you in solidarity with our Jewish sisters and brothers following the abhorrent attack upon life and community in Greater Manchester.

We pray that those who have died may rest in your eternal peace and that you would comfort those who mourn.

We pray for those in our communities who are afraid to walk the streets because of their faith and traditions.

On this day held especially holy to the Jewish community, we pray that you would guide our path and lead us through the wilderness.

Where there is enmity, we pray for peace; where there is division, healing; and where there is hatred, a mending of broken bonds.

Holy God, bring reconciliation to our nation that all might live justly and peacefully in the land.

Amen

The Revd Jez Hackett, Superintendent of Bury Methodist Circuit, shared the following statement and prayer:

We in the Bury Methodist Circuit stand with and pray for our Jewish sisters and brothers in response to the appalling attack on the Jewish Community at Heaton Park Hebrew Congregation Synagogue. An attack on any day would be awful but on Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish Calendar, it is made even worse.

There may be many things that make communities different, but our humanity is rooted in the shared belief that we are made in the image of God, and we offer our wholehearted support, love and prayers to the Jewish

Community in Bury, Manchester, and across the country.

As it has so often in the past, we are sure Manchester will rise in response to these horrible events as a city united, demonstrating the love and care that makes this region such a special place to live, and we will do all we can to be a part of that.

God of peace,

We offer you our prayers for the community of the Heaton Park Hebrew Congregation Synagogue,

For those who have been injured, we pray for your healing.

For those who filled with fear and anxiety, we pray for your peace.

For those who have bravely responded from the public and emergency services, we pray for strength.

For those in the wider community who are hurting at the wounds to their local brothers and sisters, we pray for comfort.

Today, may we hear your words of peace and love.

May we enact them in every part of our lives.

And may we be rooted in the truth of your image being at the very heart of our shared humanity.

In the name of Christ, the Prince of Peace we pray.

Amen

The Manchester Circuit, and the Methodists at Crumpsall Methodist Church, released the following statement:

We are shocked and saddened by the events of today, on this most special of days for the Jewish community.

We stand in solidarity with the Jewish community in Manchester, and share their shock at such an appalling attack.

Manchester is a place of unity - choosing to come together as a community in the face of fear and hate.

Our thoughts and prayers are offered for those impacted and affected today.

We are grateful to those involved in the ongoing work of community building in Crumpsall and across our city, especially at this time the emergency services and our community faith leaders.

We stand in solidarity with the Jewish community in Manchester, and share their shock at such an appalling attack.

The Revd Ian Rutherford, City Centre Minister, Methodist Central Hall Manchester, Co-Chair of the Greater Manchester Faith and Belief Advisory Panel and a member of GM Faith Community Leaders, released the following joint statement:

"We stand in solidarity with the local Jewish community following a serious incident at a synagogue in north Manchester. This is an appalling attack on Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish year.

We share the Mayor of Greater Manchester's thoughts: "We think of them and their families as they recover from this incident".

We affirm the work of the emergency services and pray for the wider Jewish community who are understandably in shock.

We ask that people do not speculate on any aspect of the incident.

Today and every other day the Faith Communities in Greater Manchester actively stand together against hate and with our diverse communities."

# **03 OCTOBER 2025**

# Methodist leaders welcome the appointment of Bishop Sarah Mullally as the new Archbishop of Canterbury

In a statement the President and Vice-President, and Secretary of the Methodist Conference expressed their encouragement at her appointment and the assurance of their prayers.

The full statement follows:

"We warmly welcome the news of Bishop Sarah Mullally's appointment as Archbishop of Canterbury. We pray God's

blessing upon her for this profoundly important ministry. May God guide Archbishop Sarah in her leadership within our public life, within the Church

of England and among the worldwide Anglican Communion. The Methodist Church and the Church of England are covenanted partners: in local communities across the country Methodists and Anglicans are growing together in responding to the gospel of God's love in Christ, enriching one another's discipleship, and sharing in worship and mission.

"As church leaders, we look forward to walking alongside Archbishop Mullally in that same spirit of partnership in the coming years. Our present age demands a confident and united witness by the Church, to the love and grace of God that can mend divisions and overcome the fears of our world. We are encouraged by Bishop Sarah's clear commitment to making the Church a safe space for all, where all are welcome and can thrive. We will keep Bishop Sarah and her family in our prayers as she takes up this significant and demanding global role."

The Revd Richard Andrew, President of the Methodist Conference

Mr Matt Forsyth, Vice-President of the Methodist Conference

The Revd Dr Jonathan Hustler, Secretary of the Methodist Conference.

## HOMELESSNESS SUNDAY

# 5<sup>th</sup> October 2025 (WMC Service on 12<sup>th</sup> October)

The charity Housing Justice holds Homelessness Sunday on the Sunday before World Homeless Day each year. This year, Homelessness Sunday falls on 5th October, and the theme is 'Love thy neighbour'. Withington Methodist Church are holding their service on the 12<sup>th</sup> October, lead by our minister Catherine Hughes.

The aim of Homelessness Sunday is to raise awareness of the issues surrounding homelessness among Churches and their congregations by asking Churches to run their own Homelessness Sunday Service. We hope that by taking time to reflect on Homelessness, Church congregations will consider what they can do in their own community to alleviate homelessness, suffering and poverty.

For anyone who is unable to join the WMC service on the 12<sup>th</sup>, Housing Justice is pre-recording a Homelessness Sunday Service from St Barnabas, Ealing for the Church of England weekly online channel which will be aired on 5th October, and which you can watch at home here - A Service for Homelessness Sunday | The Church of England



# Reflections on the Lectionary Reading for Homelessness Sunday by Lewis Lennon, Citadel Co-ordinator

Have you ever walked past someone sitting on the pavement — maybe wrapped in a sleeping bag, maybe holding a paper cup — and felt that mixture of emotions? Compassion. Guilt. Helplessness. Maybe even the urge to look away.

I know I have. And in that moment, it's easy to feel small. Like, what difference could I possibly make?

That's exactly where the disciples were when they cried out to Jesus, "Increase our faith!" And Jesus replied: "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you."

I love that Jesus didn't say, "Come back when you've got more faith." He said, "Bring me the little you've got, and watch what I can do with it." Because mustard seed faith may be tiny, but it's alive. And when it's planted in God's kingdom, it grows.

Psalm 37 gives us a picture of what mustard seed faith looks like in practice: "Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart." Trust — and do good. That's it. Not "solve everything." Not "carry the whole weight of the housing crisis on your shoulders." Just: trust Him — and do something.

And this is where the theme of Homelessness Sunday speaks so clearly: Love your neighbour. Not just the neighbour who waves from over the fence. But the neighbour on the bus stop bench. The neighbour in the doorway with a cardboard bed. The neighbour who feels invisible.

David Nixon, in his book Stories from the Street, puts it powerfully: "Vulnerable people are the best preachers of the gospel in their own communities." That means our neighbours on the margins don't just need our help — they often carry gospel truth in their own stories, reminding us of Jesus himself who chose to identify with the poor, the outsider, the forgotten.

Because here's the mystery of the kingdom: when we plant seeds, God makes them grow. One conversation can lead to hope. One meal can lead to community. One act of courage can ripple far beyond what we see.

So maybe the question for us today isn't, "Do I have enough faith?" Maybe it's, "What will I do with the faith I already have?"

# METHODIST WOMEN IN BRITAIN



# A letter from President Ruth Gunning

As we embark on a new Methodist year—and, by extension, a new MWIB year—I would like to take this opportunity as your President to formally introduce myself. My name is Ruth. I am a widow, with two grown up children and two grandsons.

Originally born in Shropshire, I was raised in Glasgow, Scotland from an early age. I left Scotland many years ago to pursue a career in Insurance, which later evolved into positions at BT and the Police service, where I worked on motorway control. Along the way, I earned an honours degree in Administration. Currently, I work part-time as a member of the enabling team at Stockport College.

I am a local preacher, currently completing my training and eagerly anticipating my accreditation service. Travelling is a passion of mine; I have visited many countries around the world. My current plans include trips to Cuba, Jordan, and a cruise to Norway—hopefully, nothing will prevent these journeys from happening.

During my term as President, I have chosen to support Embrace the Middle East as my charity. I am always happy to share more about this meaningful organisation, which focuses on advocacy for peace and justice, humanitarian work, support for international law, and calls for a ceasefire and the release of hostages to help end the current, devastating war. Although it is not possible to visit the region at present, I have travelled there many times in the past. I am happy to come and talk to you about this if you would like me to

I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible at our District events or maybe even at Swanwick

May God bless you all

Yours in His Service

Ruth Gunning

# Methodist Women in Britain



Manchester & Stockport Area

# AUTUMN GATHERING

# Droylsden Methodist Church

Car park: Albert Street M43 7BA





Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> October 10.30 a.m. - 3.00 p.m.

# Speaker: Deacon Jenny Jones

Our Story Our Song. Methodist Central Hall, Manchester. The past, the present and the future

Coffee served from 10.00 a.m.
Bring your own Lunch (Drinks provided)



All Welcome!



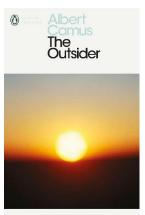
# WMC WHAT'S ON

# Withington Book Club

The next meeting of the Book Club will be on Monday 6th October, 7.30pm, when we will be reviewing "Three Men In A Boat", by Jerome K Jerome.

Following that we are reading "The Outsider", by Albert Camus, meeting to discuss this on Monday 3rd November. New members always welcome!





#### Harvest Service

On Sunday 5th October, Withington Methodist Church will be holding a Harvest Service at 10.45am.

In our usual tradition, during this service we receive any donations of non-perishable food to donate to the Fallowfield and Withington Food Bank.



If anyone is able to donate to this service, or beforehand via drop off at the church office, it would be greatly appreciated.

If you would like more information on the work of the foodbank and how you might be able to partner with them more closely, please contact them via: <a href="mailto:info@fallowfieldwithington.foodbank.org.uk">info@fallowfieldwithington.foodbank.org.uk</a> Many thanks.

Celebrating 75 years of the European Convention on Human Rights on World Quaker Day 5th October 2025

# Dreams of Peace and Freedom

a song cycle by Sue Casson performed by English Cabaret, family members of a British lawyer involved in its creation

Presented at Edinburgh Fringe, Liverpool, Coventry Cathedral, Palace of Westminster, Oxford and Nuremburg Palace of Justice

Friends Meeting House 6 Mount Street Manchester M2 5NS 5th October 2025 at 2pm followed by Q & A



Book FREE Tickets on Eventbrite

Donations to Amnesty International



## **CHURCH FAMILY NEWS**

# Congratulations Nick!

Congratulations to Nick Palfreyman for receiving his promotion to Professor of Sign Languages and Deaf Studies as of September 1<sup>st</sup>. We wish you all the luck and love in this exciting and well deserved new opportunity! Note: Image shows the British Sign Language Sign for Congratulations



# Shine Night Walk

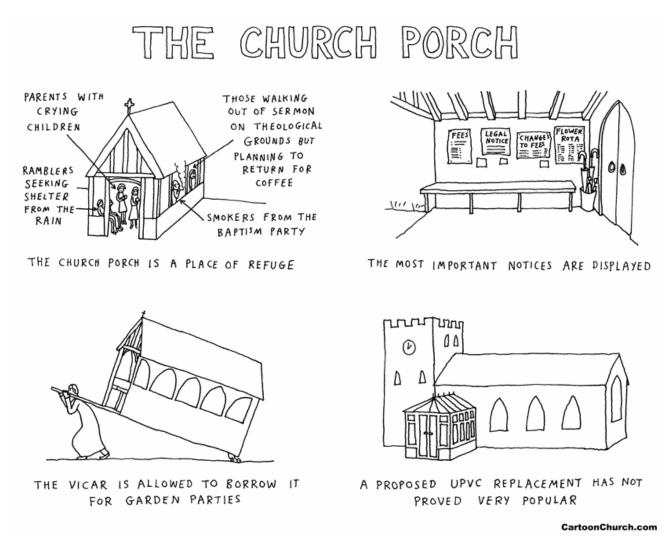
On Friday 10 October Rev Catharine will be doing a 10km Night Walk around Manchester with her sister, Maggie, in aid of Cancer Research UK. It happens to fall on what would have been their mother's birthday. She died of breast cancer in 1987.

If you wish to support the charity then please consider giving via her sponsor page: <a href="https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/page/catharines-giving-page-22">https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/page/catharines-giving-page-22</a>



She will appreciate your prayers regardless! It would be good to be able to get to bed before the sun comes up...

## THANK YOU FOR READING!



The next magazine will be out on the 31<sup>st</sup> October. As usual it can be found 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 Bracegirdle – <a href="mailto:carolinefielding@hotmail.co.uk">carolinefielding@hotmail.co.uk</a>

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)

