

*Fallings Park*  
 Sunday Service in Church at 11.00am with Elizabeth Farley.

*Fordhouses*  
 Not open for worship but you are welcome to join other acts of worship around the Circuit.

*Hurst Hill*  
 Sunday Service in Church at 10.30am with Rev. John Barrett.

*Lanesfield*  
 Sunday Service in Church at 10.30am - Local Arrangement.

*Rakegate*  
 Sunday Service in Church at 10.30am - Local Arrangement.

*St. Andrew's*  
 Sunday Service in Church at 10.30am with Rev. Peter Christie, also live streamed on YouTube channel at "ST ANDREWS CHURCH SEDGLEY" and is accessible during the week. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=qrwvypBKfCY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qrwvypBKfCY)

*St. John's*  
 Sunday Service on Zoom at 11.00am with Rev. Steve Jackson. Zoom link available on request from Revd Steve Jackson.

*Springdale*  
 Sunday Service in Church and on Zoom at 10.30am with Gabriel Gidi. Zoom link available on request from Janet Fenney.

*Stowlawn*  
 Not open for worship but you are welcome to join other acts of worship around the circuit.

*Stratton Street*  
 Sunday Service in Church 11.00am with Colin Haywood.

*Upper Ettingshall*  
 Sunday Service on Zoom at 11.00am with Rev. Steve Jackson – Zoom link available on request from Revd. Steve Jackson

*Wombourne*  
 Sunday Service in Church at 10.30am with Wendy Gould.

*Worship... Service ... Witness ... in the name of Jesus*

## Beckminster Welcomes You

Check Out Our Website @ [www.beckminsterchurch.co.uk](http://www.beckminsterchurch.co.uk)

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## Worship and Fellowship Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time 27 June 2021

### What's On This Week....

<b>Monday 28 June</b> <b>9.30am - 12.00noon Office Open</b> 4.15 - 8.00pm Dinky Divas
<b>Tuesday 29 June</b> <b>Office Closed</b> 7.15 - 8.45pm Yoga
<b>Wednesday 30 June</b> <b>10.00am - 12.30pm Office Open</b> 9.00am Zoom Prayer Group (See Notices) 7.00pm Bible Month on Zoom (See Notices)
<b>Thursday 1 July</b> <b>2.00 - 5.00pm Working from Home</b>
<b>Friday 2 July</b> <b>9.30 - 11.30am Office Open</b>
<b>Saturday 3 July</b> 11.00am - 12.30pm Dinky Divas

### Collect for the Day

**To ponder and pray** .....  
 Lord of heaven and earth, you sent your Holy Spirit to be the life and power of your Church. Sow in our hearts the seeds of your grace that we may bear the fruit of the Spirit, in love and joy and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Come and join us on  
 Sunday, 4 July 2021  
 in Church  
 10.30am Peace within,  
 Peace around  
 Action for Children Sunday  
 Janet Anderson & John Ashwood**

**10.30am Morning Worship  
led by Rev. Peggy Heim  
in Church and on Zoom**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

This day and all days are yours, Lord God.  
And this day, and all days, you give reason for us to rejoice and be glad,  
for you have loved the world in Jesus your Son,  
once and for all,  
for all days, and all places and peoples.  
We bring our offering of praise, in token return for your gift.  
In Jesus' name we meet; in Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

**StF 25 God is Here**

God is here! As we his people  
meet to offer praise and prayer,  
may we find in fuller measure  
what it is in Christ we share.  
Here, as in the world around us,  
all our varied skills and arts  
wait the coming of the Spirit  
into open minds and hearts.

Here are symbols to remind us  
of our lifelong need of grace;  
here are table, font, and pulpit;  
here the cross has central place.  
Here in honesty of preaching,  
here in silence, as in speech,  
here, in newness and renewal,  
God the Spirit comes to each.

Here our children find a welcome  
in the Shepherd's flock and fold,  
here as bread and wine are taken,  
Christ sustains us, as of old.  
Here the servants of the Servant  
seek in worship to explore  
what it means in daily living  
to believe and to adore.

**We Welcome You to Worship  
Today**

**If you are here for the first time,  
please make yourself known to  
those around you, or to one of the  
Stewards or Minister.  
You may like to sign the visitors  
book in the foyer.**

**Midweek Opportunities**

*Brewood*

Evening Prayer on a Tuesday and Friday at 7.45pm, online or by phone. Details from Helen Share.

*Codsall*

Evening Prayer on a Tuesday and Friday at 7.45pm, online or by phone. Details from Helen Share.

*Coven*

Evening Prayer on a Tuesday and Friday at 7.45pm, online or by phone. Details from Helen Share.

**Worship on Sunday, 27 June 2021**

*Beckminster*

Sunday Service in Church and on Zoom at 10.30am with Rev. Peggy Heim.

*Bilston*

Sunday Service in Church at 11.00am with Rev. William Davis.

*Bradley*

Not open for worship but you are welcome to join other acts of worship around the circuit.

*Brewood*

Sunday Service in Church at 11.00am with Rev. Jo Cox-Darling.

*Codsall*

Sunday Service in Church and on Zoom at 10.30am with Alan Eccles. Zoom link available on request from Helen Share.

*Coven*

Sunday Service in Church at 10.00am with Rev. Jo Cox-Darling.

*Cranmer*

Sunday Service in Church at 11.00am with Rev. Sam Hagerman.

*East Park*

Sunday Service in Church at 11.00am with Nadine Brown.

Dear All,

You are invited to save the date, and join us, as the Wolverhampton Methodist Circuit gives thanks for the ministry offered to us by Chris and Barry as they move into their new appointments. The leaving and afternoon tea will take place at 3.00pm on Sunday, 18 July.

There are several ways which you can take part in this creative farewell:

\* join us on site in the grounds of Codsall Methodist Church at 3.00pm. Booking is essential for this (both for catering purposes due to current covid restrictions), so please let us know you are coming by contacting Shirley.

\* the service sheet, and instructions for the onsite service will also be made available to you before the day - you may want to join with friends in a garden, or even at your own chapel - and share in the service and afternoon tea together.

\* a video montage of the event will be made available after the event.

The service will be led by Joanne Cox-Darling, with Rev'd Andrew Roberts leading our reflection, and Steve Jackson offering a vote of thanks. Please consider how you will be able to take part, onsite at Codsall or in person elsewhere around the circuit, as we celebrate the ministry Chris and Barry have offered to us.

Jo

Revd. Dr. Joanne Cox-Darling  
Wolverhampton Methodist Circuit,  
Brewood, Codsall, and Coven Methodist Churches

**Opportunities for Worship and Prayer around the Circuit**

*If you need help accessing information for on-line worship, please contact Revd Christopher Collins: [christopher.collins@methodist.org.uk](mailto:christopher.collins@methodist.org.uk)*

"SOUL SPACE" a Sunday evening gathering for quiet and reflective worship lasting about forty minutes. We will share simple prayers, readings, poetry, quietness and reflective music. We meet on Zoom at 6.30pm. on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month. For zoom details please contact Rev Chris Collins.

Lord of all, of Church and Kingdom,  
In an age of change and doubt,  
Keep us faithful to the gospel,  
help us work your purpose out.  
Here, in this day's dedication,  
all we have to give, receive:  
we, who cannot live without you,  
we adore you! We believe!

Fred Pratt Green (1903-2000)

**MHA SUNDAY 'Loneliness and Bringing Hope'**

TODAY IS METHODIST HOMES SUNDAY. MY ADMIRATION AND COMMITMENT TO MHA BEGAN HERE IN WOLVERHAMPTON 25 YEARS AGO. MHA HAS BEEN A SIGNIFICANT PART OF MY MINISTRY SINCE I FIRST WALKED THROUGH THE DOORS OF ENGLEBERG IN 1996 TO LEAD WORSHIP ON A SUNDAY EVENING.

MY JOURNEY HAS TAKEN ME TO NORWICH WHERE I OFTEN VISITED AND LED WORSHIP AT CROMWELL HOUSE, TO IPSWICH WHERE I BECAME CHAPLAIN AT NORWOOD AND TO ST. LEONARDS-ON-SEA WHERE I WAS CHAPLAIN AT LAURISTON AND OFTEN VISITED RICHMOND IN BEXHILL-ON-SEA.

METHODIST HOMES SUNDAY IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE THANKS AND TO REFLECT ON THE SUPPORT GIVEN TO OVER 18,500 OLDER PEOPLE THROUGH MHA'S CARE HOMES, RETIREMENT LIVING SCHEMES AND MHA COMMUNITY SCHEMES. IT IS ALSO AN OPPORTUNITY TO REFLECT ON AND PRAY FOR THE DEDICATED STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS WHO SUPPORT INDIVIDUALS AND THE COMMUNITIES BUILT IN EACH AND EVERY HOME AND SCHEME. MHA TOUCHES THE LIVES OF EVERYONE WHO WALKS THROUGH THE DOOR INCLUDING FAMILY, FRIENDS, VENDORS AND THOSE WHO ENTERTAIN RESIDENTS AND SCHEME PARTICIPANTS.

IT HAS BEEN A CHALLENGING YEAR FOR MHA AS IT HAS BEEN FOR ALL CARE HOMES AND FOR MANY OTHERS. I AM STILL IN TOUCH WITH STAFF AND FAMILY MEMBERS AT LAURISTON AND HAVE WATCHED, LISTENED AND PRAYED AS THEY HAVE ADJUSTED TO THE DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES AND LOST LOVED ONES.

TODAY'S THEME IS 'RELIEVING LONELINESS AND BRINGING HOPE.' PART OF MHA'S VISION IS FOR PEOPLE TO FIND MEANING AND HOPE IN LATER LIFE AND TO TACKLE LONELINESS AND ISOLATION. MHA SEEKS TO DO THIS THROUGH THEIR CHAPLAINCY SERVICE, MUSIC THERAPY AND PARTNERING WITH THE CHURCH TO REACH OUT TO THE VULNERABLE IN OUR COMMUNITIES. MHA HAS RISEN TO THE

CHALLENGES PRESENTED BY THE PANDEMIC TO CREATE MHA DIGITAL COMMUNITIES. A QUICK LOOK AT THE WEBSITE SHOWS THAT THE DIGITAL COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES INCLUDE SENSORY, SINGALONG, BAKING, SPIRITUALITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES! MHA DIGITAL COMMUNITIES REACHES OUT TO AREAS WHERE THERE ARE NO HOMES OR SCHEMES. IT IS AN EXAMPLE OF THE GOOD THAT HAS COME OUT OF FINDING CREATIVE WAYS TO MEET NEEDS DURING THE PANDEMIC. TODAY I WILL SHARE WITH YOU A COUPLE OF STORIES FROM MY EXPERIENCE AND THE FEATURE STORY IN THIS YEAR'S RESOURCE MATERIALS.

**OPENING PRAYERS**

GOD OF ALL, WE PRAISE YOU FOR YOUR LOVING PRESENCE WITH US THROUGH GOOD TIMES AND DIFFICULT TIMES. YOU KNOW EACH OF US BY NAME AND CALL US INTO COMMUNION WITH YOU AND ONE ANOTHER. THROUGHOUT JESUS' MINISTRY ON EARTH, YOU WELCOMED THE OUTSIDERS, YOUR LOVE IS FOR ALL PEOPLE AND KNOWS NO BOUNDS. YOU SHOWED YOUR ULTIMATE LOVE BY COMING AMONGST US AS ONE OF US, LEAVING BEHIND ALL HEAVENLY SPLENDOUR TO EXPERIENCE THE JOYS AND HURTS, HIGHS AND LOWS, LAUGHTER AND TEARS, HOPES AND DISAPPOINTMENTS. YET YOU REMAINED OBEДИENT AND FULL OF LOVE, AND LIVED, SERVED AND DIED FOR US. YOU WERE RAISED FROM THE DEAD AND OFFER US EVELASTING LIFE. AND SO, WE DECLARE YOUR HOLINESS, MAJESTY AND BEAUTY THAT RADIATES FROM ALL THAT IS AROUND US. AND WE WITH ALL CREATION SHOUT PRAISE TO YOU. GLORY, POWER AND PRAISE BE GIVEN TO YOU GOD, FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT. **AMEN**

AS WE RECOGNISE YOUR GOODNESS AND LOVE, ALL THAT YOU HAVE GIVEN TO US, IN THE LIFE, DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS, YOUR CONTINUED PRESENCE THROUGH YOUR HOLY SPIRIT, WE RECALL IN OUR MINDS THE THINGS WE DO, THINK AND SAY THAT FALL SHORT OF ALL THAT YOU CALL US TO BE.

AS WE REFLECT ON LONELINESS AND ISOLATION, WE ASK FOR YOUR FORGIVENESS IN THE WAY THAT YOUR CHURCH HAS CONTRIBUTED TO OTHERS FEELING UN-WELCOME IN OUR MIDST. WE CONFESS THE THINGS THAT WE HAVEN'T DONE WHICH COULD HAVE HELPED OTHERS FEEL MORE INCLUDED. WE OFFER OUR CONFESSION FOR THE WAYS IN WHICH PEOPLE STILL EXIST ON THE MARGINS.

**SILENCE**

LORD FORGIVE US, AND RENEW US IN THE POWER OF YOUR HOLY SPIRIT, THAT WE MAY PERFECTLY LOVE YOU. **AMEN.**

**ZOOM PRAYER MEETING** on a Wednesday at 9.00am. All are welcome and for further details please contact Sue.

The Church Leadership Team is aiming to produce another edition of 'The Beckoner' Magazine covering late Summer. The Editorial Team is looking for anyone who would like to offer an article for possible publication. It must not be more than one page of A4. If interested please first ring The Editor, Keith Cheetham, on Tel. 762894 to discuss.

**BIBLE MONTH JUNE.** This last session on St Mark's Gospel will be led by Rev Peggy Heim on 30 June on Zoom at 7.00pm. Those attending are asked to read Mark 11: - 16: 8. These chapters travel with Jesus to Jerusalem and begin with the Palm Sunday story and end with the Resurrection. There will be an in depth look at Mark 14: 12 - 26 the last supper. Do join us by asking Sue for the Zoom link. It is not necessary to have attended the other sessions. Bring your bibles. The Worship Team.

**JOYCE SMITH.** Our thoughts and prayers are with the family following the death of Joyce on 18 June 2021 aged 93.

**The Plants in Church for June  
are in loving memory of:**

**David Jones in memory of his parents and sister  
and  
Janet Anderson in memory of her parents  
Mr & Mrs John Archer**

**StF 415 The Church of Christ in every age**

The Church of Christ, in every age  
beset by change but Spirit-led,  
must claim and test its heritage  
and keep on rising from the dead.

Across the world, across the street,  
the victims of injustice cry  
or shelter and for bread to eat,  
and never live until they die.

Then let the servant church arise,  
a caring church that longs to be  
a partner in Christ's sacrifice,  
and clothed in Christ's humanity.

For he alone, whose blood was shed,  
Can cure the fever in our blood,  
and teach us how to share our bread  
and feed the starving multitude.

We have no mission but to serve  
In full obedience to our Lord  
To care for all, without reserve,  
and spread his liberating Word.

Fred Pratt Green (1903-2000)

**BLESSING**

SERVE YOUR GOD WITH PATIENCE AND WITH PASSION.  
BE DELIBERATE IN ENACTING YOUR FAITH. BE STEADFAST IN  
CELEBRATING THE SPIRIT'S POWER. AND MAY PEACE BE YOUR WAY  
IN THE WORLD. **AMEN.**

**Beckminster Methodist Church  
Birches Barn Road,  
Penn Fields,  
Wolverhampton WV3 7BQ  
Tel. 01902 344910**

**FRED PRATT GREEN'S STORY**

SHORTLY BEFORE I LEFT THE STATES TO TRAVEL TO MY APPOINTMENT IN NORWICH, I WAS TALKING TO STUART WHO TOLD ME THAT THERE WAS A WELL-KNOWN SUPERNUMERARY LIVING IN THE NORWICH CIRCUIT. I LEARNED ON ARRIVAL THAT HE WAS A RESIDENT AT CROMWELL HOUSE. AND SO, I MET THE FIRST OF MANY REMARKABLE PEOPLE WHO ARE PART OF THE MHA FAMILY IN THIS WORLD AND WITH THE GLORIOUS COMPANY OF THE SAINTS IN LIGHT. I REMEMBER DISTINCTLY THE DAY I MET FRED PRATT GREEN. A STAFF MEMBER TOOK ME OVER TO HIS SEAT BY A WINDOW LOOKING OUT INTO THE GARDEN. SHE SAID, 'FRED, THE NEW MINISTER IN THE CIRCUIT WOULD LIKE TO MEET YOU.' FRED RESPONDED, 'LOVELY, I WOULD LIKE TO MEET HIM.' AT WHICH POINT I SAT DOWN NEXT TO HIM. HE SMILED AND SAID WITH A WINK, 'HE IS A SHE!' FRED PRATT GREEN HAD A LONG AND DISTINGUISHED MINISTRY IN THIS COUNTRY AND IS WELL KNOWN FOR HIS POETRY AND HYMN WRITING. TODAY'S SERVICE INCLUDES TWO OF HIS HYMNS. IN 1995 HE WAS HONOURED BY THE QUEEN WITH AN MBE.

IN 1990 FRED AND HIS WIFE MOVED INTO CROMWELL HOUSE. HE RECORDS THE EXPERIENCE IN THIS DELIGHTFUL LITTLE BOOK OF POETRY CALLED *THE LAST LAP*.

'FIRST IMPRESSIONS.' OLIVER HOUSE...THINLY DISGUISED CROMWELL HOUSE.

*A five-day, free visit  
is a clever stratagem  
to see if they take to us,  
and we take to them.*

*It is not our first visit  
to Oliver House, but today  
we see it in a new light,  
think of it in a new way.*

*The site was large enough  
for a two-storey spread,  
thus sparing us the sensation  
of being shut-in till dead.*

*Without wasting their money  
on architectural frills  
the planners gave us a Home  
that admirably fulfils.*

*its purpose. The entrance  
is spacious and welcoming,  
though visitors are warned,  
politely, to ring the bell.*

*Essentials are to hand:  
the office, visitors' loos:  
and an In-and-Out board,  
more neglected than in use.*

*On the right is the lounge,  
and a room for prayer  
and music; sensibly  
the best piano is there.*

*Kitchen and dining-room  
are first floor, to keep odours  
from Reception, with a lift  
for the disabled and infirm.*

*Each resident has a room,  
small, cosy, with space to spare  
for everything necessary  
for our safety and welfare;*

*and if, after due warning,  
we choke it with furniture,  
and clutter of memorabilia,  
it's our own fault, to be sure.*

*Are the first impressions best?  
This place has the 'feel' of home,  
that unspoken assurance  
we would be made welcome.*

**MY MHA ART COLLECTION**

Make me a channel of your peace.  
Where there's despair in life let me bring hope;  
where there is darkness, only light;  
and where there's sadness, every joy:

*O Master grant that I may never seek  
o much to be consoled as to console;  
to be understood as to understand;  
to be loved as to love with all my soul.*

Make me a channel of your peace.  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
In giving unto all that we receive,  
And in dying that we're born to eternal life.

Sebastian Temple (1928-1997)  
from the *Prayer of St. Francis*

#### **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

STRONG COVENANT GOD, SAVE US FROM BEING SELF-CENTRED IN OUR PRAYERS, AND TEACH US TO REMEMBER TO PRAY FOR OTHERS. WE PRAY FOR OUR GLOBAL COMMUNITY...REMEMBERING ESPECIALLY THE G7 LEADERS GATHERED IN CORNWALL. WE PRAY FOR THOSE LIVING IN THE MIDST OF VIOLENCE AND CHAOS...AND FOR THOSE WHO WORK FOR PEACE. WE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE HOMELESS OR LIVING IN POVERTY...AND FOR THOSE WHO WORK TO MEET THEIR NEEDS. WE PRAY FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS AND OTHER KEY WORKERS...AND FOR THOSE WHO SUPPORT THEM. WE PRAY FOR EACH OTHER... MAY WE BE SO BOUND UP IN LOVE WITH THOSE FOR WHOM WE PRAY THAT WE MAY FEEL THEIR NEEDS AS ACUTELY AS WE FEEL OUR OWN, AND INTERCEDE FOR THEM WITH SENSITIVITY, WITH UNDERSTANDING AND WITH IMAGINATION. THIS WE ASK IN JESUS'S NAME. **AMEN.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

#### **PRAYERS FOR GIFTS**

Here, in this days dedication,  
all we have to give, receive:  
we, who cannot live without you,  
we adore you! We believe! **Amen**

PICTURE OF A CHILD PRAYING AND PRAYED THE LORD'S PRAYER. THEN WE CAME TO A PICTURE OF CHILDREN BEING EVACUATED DURING THE WAR. ONE OF THE WOMEN SHARED THAT SHE HAD A WONDERFUL TIME ON A FARM. THEN ANOTHER WOMAN TOLD US HER STORY. WITH TEARS IN HER EYES, SHE TOLD HAD BEEN MISERABLE AND ABUSED. THERE WAS SILENCE FOR A MOMENT. THE STAFF MEMBERS STOPPED TALKING AND LISTENED. THE OTHER THREE WOMEN WHO UNDERSTOOD HER PAIN SPOKE TO HER IN A WAY THAT WITH ALL MY TRAINING AND ALL MY EXPERIENCE I COULD NOT. THEY 'SIMPLY' LOVED HER AND IN DOING SO EASED HER PAIN AND OFFERED HOPE. THE STAFF AND I GREW IN FAITH AND UNDERSTANDING. WE WERE STANDING ON HOLY GROUND JUST AS THOSE WHO WITNESSED JESUS HEAL THE MAN IN THE STORY FROM MARK'S GOSPEL.

**MHA PRAYERS – ONE OF MHA'S CHAPLAINS**

LOVING GOD, YOU CALL US TO FOLLOW YOUR SON, TO BE WITH PEOPLE, TO EAT TOGETHER, WORSHIP TOGETHER, TO BRING A HEALING TOUCH. THROUGH THESE LONG MONTHS WE HAVE GRIEVED FOR ALL THE TIMES THAT HAS NOT BEEN POSSIBLE. WE PRAY FOR ALL THOSE WHO ARE LONELY, SEPARATED FROM LOVED ONES, FEELING LOST OR AFRAID. WE GIVE THANKS FOR THE WORK OF METHODIST HOMES. FOR DEDICATED STAFF SUSTAINING COMMUNITY, RELIVING LONELINESS AND ISOLATION. FOR THE LEADERSHIP, STEERING THROUGH STORMY WATERS. FOR THE RETURN OF VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS. FOR ALL OUR SUPPORTERS. WE PRAY FOR THE HOMES IN OUR WOLVERHAMPTON: ENGLEBERG, WATERSIDE AND BRIDGE COURT...FOR THE HOMES WHERE I HAVE VOLUNTEERED OR SERVED AS CHAPLAIN: CROMWELL HOUSE IN NORWICH, NORWOOD IN IPSWICH, LAURISTON IN ST. LEONARDS AND RICHMOND IN BEXHILL. GOD OF COMMUNITY, WE THANK YOU FOR ALL THOSE WHO BRING LIGHT AND HOPE WHEN WE NEED IT MOST. **AMEN.**

**StF 707 Make me a channel**

Make me a channel of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me bring your love;  
where there is injury your pardon Lord;  
and where there's doubt, true faith in you:  
*O Master grant that I may never seek  
so much to be consoled as to console;  
to be understood as to understand;  
to be loved as to love with all my soul.*

READING: Mark 5: 1 - 20 read by Ann Holt

**Jesus Heals the Gerasene Demoniac**

**5** They came to the other side of the lake, to the country of the Gerasenes. **2** And when he had stepped out of the boat, immediately a man out of the tombs with an unclean spirit met him. **3** He lived among the tombs; and no one could restrain him any more, even with a chain; **4** for he had often been restrained with shackles and chains, but the chains he wrenched apart, and the shackles he broke in pieces; and no one had the strength to subdue him. **5** Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always howling and bruising himself with stones. **6** When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and bowed down before him; **7** and he shouted at the top of his voice, 'What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me.' **8** For he had said to him, 'Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!' **9** Then Jesus asked him, 'What is your name?' He replied, 'My name is Legion; for we are many.' **10** He begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country. **11** Now there on the hillside a great herd of swine was feeding **12** and the unclean spirits begged him, 'Send us into the swine; let us enter them.' **13** So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the swine; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the lake, and were drowned in the lake.

**14** The swineherds ran off and told it in the city and in the country. Then people came to see what it was that had happened. **15** They came to Jesus and saw the demoniac sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the legion; and they were afraid. **16** Those who had seen what had happened to the demoniac and to the swine reported it. **17** Then they began to beg Jesus to leave their neighbourhood. **18** As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed by demons begged him that he might be with him. **19** But Jesus refused, and said to him, 'Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and what mercy he has shown you.' **20** And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.

**ANTHONY'S STORY**

ANTHONY'S STORY IS THE FEATURE STORY IN THE MHA RESOURCES THIS YEAR. I APPRECIATE ANTHONY'S STORY BECAUSE IT REFLECTS THE WORK DONE OUTSIDE MHA WALLS IN THE COMMUNITY. ANTHONY IS BLIND AND GETS ABOUT WITH THE AID OF HIS GUIDE DOG, RODNEY. HE LIVES IN A RETIREMENT COMMUNITY IN BIRMINGHAM CALLED CHATHAM PLACE. SHORTLY AFTER HE MOVED TO CHATHAM PLACE, ANTHONY WENT OUT TO THE HIGH STREET TO DO A BIT OF SHOPPING WITH RODNEY. HE WAS CONFRONTED BY SOMEONE WHO DEMANDED MONEY AND THREATENED TO HURT RODNEY IF ANTHONY DIDN'T GIVE IT TO HIM. AS A RESULT, ANTHONY LOST CONFIDENCE AND WAS AFRAID TO GO OUT ON HIS OWN. FORTUNATELY, THE MANAGER OF HIS RETIREMENT COMMUNITY KNEW OF THE WORK OF MHA COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS AND CONTACTED, TANYA, THE MHA COMMUNITY MANAGER FOR SOUTH AND WEST BIRMINGHAM. TANYA SAID: 'WHEN I FIRST MET ANTHONY, I EXPERIENCED A SENSE OF ANGER AT THE WAY HE HAD BEEN TREATED BY THE LOCAL COMMUNITY IN TERMS OF BEING A VICTIM OF CRIME AND A SENSE OF DUTY AND WANTING TO DO SOMETHING TO REPAIR THE DAMAGE THAT HAD BEEN CAUSED TO HIM. MHA VOLUNTEERS HAVE HELPED ANTHONY TO REGAIN HIS CONFIDENCE AND TRUST IN PEOPLE. BEFORE THE PANDEMIC ANTHONY WAS PART OF A GROUP THAT MET ON THURSDAYS. HE SAYS: 'MHA GETS YOU OUT AND ABOUT MEETING PEOPLE. YOU ARE NOT STUCK INSIDE ALL THE TIME. THERE ARE THINGS TO LOOK FORWARD TO, LIKE ACTIVITIES AND MEETING PEOPLE YOU WOULDN'T HAVE MET OTHERWISE.' TANYA'S FAITH UNDERPINS HER WORK WITH MHA. SHE BELIEVES, 'THE OPPORTUNITY TO AFFECT CHANGE IN SOMEONE'S LIFE ON A DAY TO DAY BASIS THROUGH WORKING FOR MHA IS VERY REWARDING.'

**REFLECTIONS**

THE PANDEMIC HAS MEANT THAT MANY MORE OF US HAVE GAINED PERSONAL INSIGHT INTO WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SOCIALLY ISOLATED, LONELY OR BOTH. OUR SOCIAL INTERACTIONS HAVE BEEN LIMITED OR NON-EXISTENT. WE HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO TRAVEL.

THE PASSAGE FROM MARK ABOUT THE GERASENE DEMONIAK HELPS US TO REFLECT ON WHAT IT MEANS TO RELIEVE LONELINESS AND GIVE HOPE TO OTHERS. TODAY WE MIGHT ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE MAN SUFFERED FROM A SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS... SCHIZOPHRENIA OR A PERSONALITY DISORDER. WE MIGHT HAVE A LOT OF QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS HEALING...NOT THE LEAST OF WHICH WOULD BE WHAT HAPPENED TO THE PIGS! BUT WHAT IS CLEAR AND IMPORTANT FOR US TO THINK ABOUT TODAY IS THAT THE MAN WAS ISOLATED, OSTRACIZED, ALONE WITH NO HOPE. HE WAS CHAINED

UP, LIVING IN THE TOMBS, HOWLING IN ANGUISH. HE WAS IN SUCH DESPAIR THAT HE WAS SELF HARMING. WE READ THAT HE WAS BRUISING HIMSELF WITH STONES. THE AUTHOR OF THIS YEAR'S MHA RESOURCES SPECULATES THAT HE MAY HAVE BEEN COPYING THE WAY HE WAS TREATED BY THE VILLAGERS.

IN THE DRAMATIC MOMENT REVEALED IN MARK'S STORY THIS DESPERATE MAN MEETS JESUS. IN HEALING HIM JESUS RESTORES HIS DIGNITY AND IDENTITY. HE EVEN GIVES THE MAN A MISSION. HEALED AND WHOLE THE MAN WANTS TO FOLLOW JESUS. BUT JESUS TELLS HIM TO GO HOME AND TELL WHAT THE LORD HAS DONE FOR HIM. HE RESPONDED TO JESUS' COMMISSION. WE ARE TOLD THAT HE: 'WENT AWAY AND BEGAN TO PROCLAIM IN THE DECAPOLIS HOW MUCH JESUS HAD DONE FOR HIM; AND EVERYONE WAS AMAZED.' JESUS RELIEVED HIS LONELINESS, HIS ISOLATION AND GAVE HIM A PURPOSE AND HOPE. WE ARE CALLED TO DO THE SAME FOR THE VULNERABLE IN OUR COMMUNITY. OVER AND OVER AGAIN THROUGHOUT 16 YEARS OF CHAPLAINCY WITH MHA I SAW STAFF, VOLUNTEERS AND FAMILY MEMBERS REACH OUT TO RESIDENTS RELIEVING LONELINESS AND GIVING HOPE IN BOTH BIG AND SMALL WAYS.

AS CHURCH DOORS CLOSED AND FAMILY MEMBERS WERE UNABLE TO VISIT MHA CHAPLAINS AND STAFF CLOTHED THEMSELVES IN PPE, FAMILIARIZED THEMSELVES WITH ALL THE RULES AND CONTINUED TO COMFORT, REASSURE AND SIMPLY LOVE.

IN ANTHONY'S STORY WE LEARN THAT THROUGH AN INCREDIBLY HARD EXPERIENCE HE HAD LOST HIS CONFIDENCE. INSPIRED BY HER OWN FAITH TANYA WAS THERE WITH VOLUNTEERS AND SUPPORTED BY THE LOCAL CHURCH TO GIVE HIM DIGNITY AND WORTH THROUGH A NEW COMMUNITY OF FRIENDS.

**WOMEN OF LAURISTON STORY**

ONE AFTERNOON I SAT WITH FOUR WOMEN IN THE DEMENTIA UNIT AT LAURISTON. WE WERE SITTING AROUND A TABLE IN THE LOUNGE. IN THE BACKGROUND SOME STAFF MEMBERS WERE WORKING ON RESIDENTS' NOTES AND TALKING QUIETLY. I OPENED A BOOK FROM A SERIES OF BOOKS CALLED PICTURES TO SHARE CREATED ESPECIALLY FOR PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA. THIS PARTICULAR BOOK WAS ABOUT CHILDHOOD. THE FOUR WOMEN AND I WERE ENJOYING THE BOOK AND I WAS LEARNING ABOUT THEIR CHILDHOODS AS THE PICTURES AND SIMPLE WORDS OR POEMS TRIGGERED MEMORIES. I TURNED A PAGE AND THERE WAS A PICTURE OF A GROUP OF CHILDREN AT CHRISTMAS TIME AND THE WORDS TO AWAY IN A MANGER. IT MAY HAVE BEEN SUMMERTIME BUT WE BEGAN TO SING REVERENTLY AND SOON THE STAFF JOINED IN AS THEY DID A FEW MOMENTS LATER AS WE LOOKED AT A