

SPOTLIGHT

FEBRUARY 2026



MESSAGE FROM KARL

Writing something each month for Spotlight is one of the most enjoyable tasks as the Minister of New Malden Methodist Church, but is always among the more challenging when it comes to deciding what to say! I often start by thinking about world events and topical issues, yet when these both beggar belief at times and seem so unrelentingly disturbing – the brutal shootings by ICE agents in Minnesota and the Orange Menace's seeming determination to annex resource-rich territory being just two examples – that is not necessarily an inviting prospect. So, this month, I thought I would share something that brings me joy, in the hope it might make you smile too.

One of the biggest surprises for me in this past year or so has been discovering how much I enjoy playing Short Tennis each fortnight in the Upper Hall, with a varied group of interesting people. While I enjoy long walks – hence my using part of my sabbatical a couple of years back to

undertake a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostella – and cycling around the various local parks on my tricycle, sport has not always held much attraction for me. My being one of God's less well-coordinated children, and having an unhappy legacy of always being among the last to be picked for teams at school, both served to put me off somewhat for a long time!

However, in joining the Short Tennis group, my experience has been very positive and encouraged me to try other activities too. One of the most enjoyable things is being with people who enjoy the game for its own sake, and are not hyper competitive – which does mean one does not have to watch out for vicious serves and cunning tactics, but when the ball does not behave itself and flies off in unexpected directions, it is not a problem! There are always a lot of laughs, and a feel of community and friendship that make it genuinely good fun. It is also very special to see, for example, the way particular others come to life when they play and really enjoy taking part. The value of coming together is, as I have learnt, about far more than the actual tennis.

As I prepare to move to my new appointment in Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill in the summer, one of the things I will miss most is the set of varied and fun activities to join in with in Wesley's, and the sense of community which has developed and grown in the years since we emerged from the challenges of the pandemic. It is great to keep meeting new people and, as



one person said, to get together with friends I never knew I had. Into the future, I hope to develop and cultivate this sense of community in my new context, and hope that when she arrives, Rev Alana (pictured above with Karl and Sally), along with Lee and Barry, will see the work here grow from strength to strength.

We hear a lot about loneliness in our communities, especially among older people. As such, there is real value in the missional work being undertaken in and through Wesley's – a value which is broader than what traditionally comes under the heading of 'evangelism'. Of course, not everyone who comes into the building through the week will wish to join us for

Sunday worship, and that's a reminder that the value of what we do extends beyond bums on seats in services.

However, I hope that whether someone comes in to enjoy a cuppa and a warm welcome, or to join in one of the growing programme of wellness activities, they may experience glimpses of God's love put into practice and, in at least some cases, may feel they'd like to join us for our principal purpose – worshipping the God who is the Source of all love.

So, may we keep offering Short Tennis and other activities that bring people joy, and have the

courage (because I think it does take some) to sidestep the temptation to be drawn into worrying about attendance and membership figures. The Kingdom of God is bigger than the Methodist Church and, as I have found in the Upper Hall on Thursday afternoons, shows up in some really surprising places and situations.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

CIRCUIT LENT COURSE

Thursday 26 February

Surbiton Hill - Vindra Maraj-Ogden

Tuesday 3 March

Chessington - Sharon Lloyd

Monday 9 March

New Malden - Karl Rutledge

Tuesday 17 March

Chessington - Duncan Lloyd

Thursday 26 March

Kingston - Jilly Bridges

The sessions will begin at 8pm and last for about an 1 hour 15 mins.

Refreshments from 7.30pm. Please look out for further information on the notice board in Wesley's.

SHARON LLOYD ACCREDITATION SERVICE

Sunday 15 February, 4pm at

Chessington Methodist Church (KT9 2DJ).

Stan Brown will be preaching.

Refreshments served after the service.

BIBLE STUDY

All are welcome to join the Lent Bible studies, which will be on Wednesdays, 11am to 12pm in the Sanctuary. Grab a cuppa and come along to explore the Gospel reading for the coming Sunday.

18 February

Jesus in the wilderness: Matthew 4:1 – 11

25 February

Jesus meets Nicodemus at night: John 3:1 – 17

4 March

Jesus and the woman at the well: John 4:5 – 42

11 March

Jesus and the man blind from birth: John 9:1 – 41

18 March

Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead: John 11:1 – 45

25 March

Jesus arrives in Jerusalem: Matthew 21: - 11

1 April

Alleluia! Jesus is risen: Matthew 28:1 – 10

After Easter, we can decide what we would then like to study together.

SPOTLIGHT'S SAFEGUARDING SPACE

Thank you to all who came to the Foundation Module Safeguarding training on Wednesday evening. Another training session will be held at Surbiton Hill Methodist Church in the summer for those who could not attend. Our church's Safeguarding Policy 2026 was agreed at the Church Council in January and is displayed in Wesley's. Thank you to all for ensuring our Church is a safe space.

Liz Edwards – Safeguarding Officer



The Methodist Church

DEMYSTIFYING ... MEMBERSHIP AND MEETINGS

Welcome to the first of a short series of pieces trying to demystify some of the things we do in the Methodist Church that might not immediately make sense. This month, we are looking at what it means to be a church member, and what it has to do with the various meetings that punctuate the church calendar.

STEPPING BACK IN TIME

The principal founders of Methodism, John and Charles Wesley, never intended to start a new church; they were both ordained Anglican clergymen, who hoped to renew the Church of England from within. The label 'Methodist' began as a derogatory term, mocking the methodical behaviour and attitudes of the 'Holy Club' in Oxford to which the brothers belonged, as students at the university there. In seeking to put their faith into practice, they helped the poor, visited prisoners, cared for sick and challenged those in power, but also liked their clear rules and ways of doing

things, hence the nickname they were given.

Later on, after the famous incidents at Aldersgate Street in 1738, in which their faith really came alive and they felt their hearts 'strangely warmed', the Wesleys found themselves at the forefront of a movement for spiritual renewal and revitalisation which would come to be known as the 18th century Evangelical Revival.

The early Methodist societies were meant

to complement the worshipping life of parish churches. They consisted of small groups called class meetings, in which members gathered in homes to pray for one another and hold each other to account, before coming together on Sunday evenings or afternoons (so as not to clash with parish services on Sunday mornings) to worship



together. In order to be permitted to receive Communion at these wider gatherings, everybody needed a ticket to signify that they belonged to a class and were a member in good standing. This is the origin of the annual membership tickets given out every year, and of the ministry of Class Leaders (now often called Pastoral Visitors or Pastoral Friends).

Over time, however, these Methodist

societies eased away from the structures and authority of the Church of England, and via a long period of splits and tensions that there isn't room to outline here, the Methodist Church in Britain was formed in 1932.

The Deed of Union is the key legal document governing what had now become a church/denomination in its own right.



MEMBERSHIP TODAY

The legacy of Methodism being an 'opt-in' organisation (as opposed to the automatic assumption of membership that underpins the Anglican parish system) is this concept of church membership.

Membership as it stands today reflects a dual commitment: to the Methodist Church in Britain, as a family of disciples held together by a shared passion for God's love for all people, and to a particular local church as a community putting this passion into practice through worship, learning and caring, evangelism and service. For most people, a local church will be the main focus of their sense of belonging, but local churches are also part of a wider structure:

- **Circuits:** groups of local churches in a particular area, who share in mission and ministry, and to whom presbyters and deacons (the two types of Methodist minister) are stationed;
- **Districts:** groups of circuits across a wider geographical area. The Kingston

Methodist Circuit is part of the London District, and accesses resources, support and expertise from this regional setup.

- **Conference:** the Methodist Church's national decision-making body, made up of representatives elected by their Districts and those with other particular concerns and/or roles in the life of the Church nationally. The President and Vice President of the Conference serve one-year terms.

All of this means that, while our main concern will probably be with our particular local church, to be a member of the Methodist Church is to be connected to other Methodists throughout the country (and indeed the world, as there are Methodists in dozens of countries), which is why the term 'Connexionism' is sometimes used. We are bound together as part of the Body of Christ, and called by God to love and serve others because God first loved us.

If you are not already a member and would like to find out more, speak to Karl. He will be happy to chat it through with you, and to answer any questions you have.

WHAT IS THE CHURCH COUNCIL?

One of the myths about membership is that becoming a church member means taking on legal responsibility for that local church, and in particular financial liability should something major go wrong. That is not true, because instead there is a governing body called the Church Council.

The Church Council consists of the Superintendent of the Circuit to which that church belongs, the Minister in Pastoral Charge and any other presbyters or deacons

working in that church, particular officeholders such as the Secretary and the Treasurer, and those appointed by the local church. Anybody who is a member of the Methodist Church may offer to serve on the



Church Council, and it is an important responsibility.

The Leadership Team of the church, and its other committees, exercise the authority delegated to them by the Church Council, who act as what is called the Managing Trustees.

Moreover, if the local church is also a charity, the Managing Trustees are also trustees of the charity and accountable to the Charity Commission.

The Church Council meets a minimum of twice a year (usually three or four times) for regular meetings, though urgent matters such as expensive building repairs may need addressing with extra (dramatically called 'extraordinary') gatherings as necessary. They make decisions, in consultation with the wider church community as appropriate,

about the mission, ministry and governance of the local church and, as such, receive regular reports on practical matters such as mission planning, safeguarding, finance, pastoral issues and property matters.

Anyone can come along to the meetings to observe and to contribute, but only Church Council members can vote. If you are up for being more involved in the life of the local church and are eligible to be a trustee of a charity (there are restrictions around bankruptcy, certain criminal convictions, etc.), then putting yourself forward to be on the Church Council is a great way to do that. Appointments are renewed every year, so while you can be on the

Council for up to six years, you do not have to serve that full period of time. If you would like to find out more, do have a chat with Karl or anyone on the Council, or come along to observe a meeting and see what happens for yourself.

WHAT ABOUT THE ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING?

In order that the congregation as a whole is connected to those representing them on the Church Council, it is the Annual Church Meeting (ACM) which appoints people to said Council, as well as hearing an overview of the past year and feeding into plans for the next. Do come along to the ACM, if you can, to make your voice heard and share your ideas for shaping our future mission.

**Is there something that you would like to see Demystified?
If so, let us know – nmmc@hotmail.co.uk – and we'll set Karl to work demystifying.**

SHELTERBOX BOOK CLUB

Following Judith's November article about book clubs I thought I would tell you about one that I have recently joined. In the last couple of years I have made a concerted effort to read more. Having got through most of my "to be read" pile I was determined to widen my pool of books. I was particularly conscious of the western bias to the books I read and really wanted to read more diverse voices, particularly from the global majority.

A few months ago an advert appeared in Facebook from ShelterBox about a book club. Normally I skip over Facebook adverts

toolkits, solar lights and cooking sets.

ShelterBox have been running a book club for a number of years. For a monthly minimum cost of £10 members receive a new book every 6 weeks. A few weeks before receiving the book there is a chance to vote on the book from a shortlist of three. A few weeks after receiving the book there is an opportunity to take part in an online discussion about the book and also a question and answer session with the author.

So what about my experience. I joined towards the end of 2025. As part of my welcome pack I received a specially commissioned book called *Tamesis Street*. Written by 30 authors this tells the story of Londoners losing their homes to flooding after the Thames Barrier is breached in 2050. Authors include Cressida Cowell, Joanna Harris, Jay Rayner. None knew what the others had written but have created a seamless story. My first real book was *Edenglassie* by Aboriginal author, Melissa Lucashenko. Set in Brisbane the story is told over two timelines, 1850s when the transportation of convicts ended and Queensland was becoming independent and 2024, the bicentenary of the Morton Bay

settlement. It brings to the fore some of the injustices perpetuated against the first nation people. I have now started my second book, *Scattered* by Aamna Mohdin who came to this country as a refuge from the civil war in Somalia as a young girl.

- Robert Elves



A selection of past books - photo from ShelterBox website shelterbox.org/book-club

but this one piqued my interest. ShelterBox is an international relief charity. Some of you may have come across them as they are actively supported by Inner Wheel amongst other organisations. They provide emergency shelter after disasters supplying essential items to families such as tents,

CHRISTMAS CAROLING





Words of the new carol included in Lessons and Carols, as requested:

CAN YOU BELIEVE IT

Can you believe it –
this is our Saviour.
Born into poverty
but rich in sacred love.
God is now with us,
laid in the manger,
needing our human care
yet divine to the core.

*This is our God, the Light of the World!
Hope for the nations now unfurled.
In his living, loving, dying, rising,
we are set free.*

This is the mystery,
here is the glory:
dynamic eternity
is spoken into time.
Word, Light and Presence;
love is the essence
of he who has come to us so
we no more may die.

Jesus embodies
God's way of living,
not grasping for worldly power
but sharing gifts of grace.
Striving for justice,
freeing the captives,
bringing good news to all
through him our God has made.

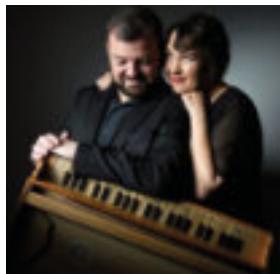
So, this Advent,
we each get ready
to welcome God again,
that Love be born anew.
For here is goodness,
there lies our true hope,
as Word made incarnate
has died and yet does still live.

Karl Rutledge (2025)

MUSIC AT NMMC

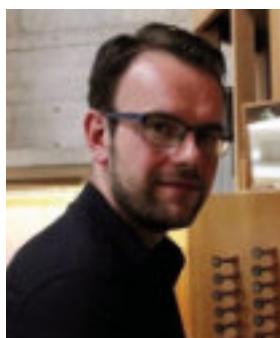
MUSIC IN NEW MALDEN

Sunday 8 February, 3pm



‘Music for a While’ –
A stroll through
three centuries of
English song.
Kate Semmens –
Soprano, and
Steven Devine –
Harpsichord and
Ottavino.

Sunday 15 February, 3pm



Organ masterclass
for young players
with James Gough
(coach)
Come and hear
some splendid
playing, learn about
organ technique
and performance,
plus a short recital
by James Gough.

LUNCHTIME CONCERT

Tuesday 17 February, 1.10pm



40 minutes of music with Sofia Mekhonoshina,
clarinet and Steven Neugarten, piano.

NMMC WEBSITE REVAMP

 **New Malden
Methodist Church**
At the *heart* of the High Street

Home Worship & Services News & Notices Wesley's What's On At Wesley's Room Hire Contacts Useful Links

Giving

A warm welcome to
New Malden Methodist Church



Over the coming months we are planning on revamping the NMMC website www.newmaldenmethodistchurch.com. In order for us to do this most effectively we would love to get your feedback. We have prepared a short questionnaire that we would like as many people as possible to complete.

At the moment the questionnaire is only available online as a Google Form but there will be some hard copies available. If you would like to receive a hard copy email nmmc@hotmail.co.uk or pop by the office during the week.

You can find the Form here:
tinyurl.com/bdeefptm
or by scanning the QR Code.





KINGSTON INNER WHEEL

“TRY ANYTHING ONCE!”

Come and join our next session

an introduction to

MAGIC!

with Magician John Field

Bring your own wand!

Wednesday

4th February

7 for 7.15 pm

The Glass Room
St. Andrew's Church
Maple Road
Surbiton KT6 4AL

£10 per person

*Let us know if you are
coming ~
and check for future sessions*

Innerwheelclub_kot@hotmail.co.uk

SIGNIFICANT FEBRUARY DATES

1

2003

Sixteen minutes before it was scheduled to land, the Space Shuttle Columbia broke apart in flight over west Texas, killing all seven crew members.

7

1812

Novelist Charles Dickens (1812-1870) was born in Portsmouth, England.

11

1847

American inventor Thomas Edison (1847-1931) was born in Milan, Ohio.

22

1962

In Montgomery, Alabama, 80 participants, including Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks, in the three-month-old bus boycott voluntarily gave themselves up for arrest.

27

1950

The 22nd Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified, limiting the president to two terms or a maximum of ten years in office.

3

1870

The 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified, guaranteeing the right of citizens to vote, regardless of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

8

1587

Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, was beheaded at Fotheringhay, England, after 19 years as a prisoner of Queen Elizabeth I.

12

1809

Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) the 16th U.S. President was born in Hardin County, Kentucky.

24

1582

Pope Gregory XIII corrected mistakes on the Julian calendar by dropping 10 days and directing that the day after October 4, 1582 would be October 15th.

27

1991

In Desert Storm, the 100-hour ground war ended as Allied troops entered Kuwait just four days after launching their offensive.

6

1952

King George VI of England died. Upon his death, his daughter Princess Elizabeth became Queen Elizabeth II.

11

1990

Nelson Mandela, at age 71, was released from prison after serving 27 years of a life sentence.

15

1989

Soviet Russia completed its military withdrawal from Afghanistan after nine years of unsuccessful involvement in the civil war between rebel groups and the Afghan government.

26

1848

The Communist Manifesto pamphlet was published by two young socialists, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.

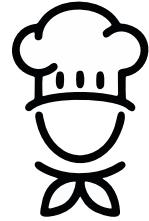
28

1986

Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme (1927-1986) was assassinated in Stockholm while exiting a movie theater with his wife.

RECIPE

I have been asked by a couple of people at the Saturday Charity Bake Sale whether I could provide the recipe for Cheesy Biscuits. It's very simple and quick to make and a good savoury snack for children. - **Mary Garrett**



Ingredients

56g butter
113g Cheddar cheese grated
56g All Bran
56g plain flour
Pinch of salt (optional)
Pinch of cayenne pepper

Method

Beat butter and cheese together until light and fluffy.
Stir in remaining ingredients, mix well and knead together if necessary.
Place walnut sized balls onto baking tray.
Flatten with fork dipped in flour.
Bake in moderate oven Gas 4. Fan 170 for approx 20 mins
Remove immediately from baking tray.

Church contact information – www.newmaldenmethodistchurch.com

Revd Dr Karl Rutledge (Minister)	07932 242789	karl.rutledge@methodist.org.uk
n/a Monday		
Mr Barry Sawyer (Administrator)	020 8942 1288	nmmc@hotmail.co.uk
Mrs Lee Monczak (Development Officer)		nmmc.wesleys@hotmail.com
Mrs Julia Morton (Senior Steward)		juliamorton@virginmedia.com
Mrs Liz Edwards (Steward)		lizedwards513@gmail.com
Mrs Julie Haines (Steward)		juliehaines53@gmail.com

Charity Registration Number 1176621

NEXT SPOTLIGHT ISSUE

Please send Barry – nmmc@hotmail.co.uk – anything you think might be of interest: reports and images of NMMC events, memories, news of members, advice for life, poems, photos, recipes, quizzes, etc, by **Monday 23 February**.

DONATIONS

New Malden Methodist Church has a donations page set up with the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF).

Please scan this QR code if you wish to donate online.



NMMC DATES: FEBRUARY

Tuesday 3rd	10.30am	Walking Group
Thursday 5th	10.30am	Knit & Natter
	2.00 – 4.00pm	Creative Arts Group
Friday 6th	11.30am	Writers Workshop
Saturday 7th	10.00am – 12.00pm	Charity Bake Sale – NMMC
Tuesday 10th	10.30am	Tai Chi
	2.30pm	Bereavement Cafe
	7.30pm	Wives & Friends – Phrases and Sayings
Thursday 12th	10.30am	Knit & Natter
	2.00 – 3.30pm	Short Tennis (Upper Hall)
Friday 13th	11.30am	Writers Workshop
	2.00 – 4.00pm	Board Games
Saturday 14th	10.00am – 12.00pm	Charity Bake Sale – Nanoom UK
Tuesday 17th	10.30am	Walking Group
Wednesday 18th	7.30pm	Ash Wednesday Service
Thursday 19th	10.30am	Knit & Natter
	2.00 – 4.00pm	Creative Arts Group
Friday 20th	10.00 – 11.30am	Writers Workshop
Saturday 21st	10.00am – 12.00pm	Charity Bake Sale – NM Rotary
Tuesday 24th	10.30am	Tai Chi Qigong
	7.30pm	Wives & Friends – My Role as Funeral Celebrant
Thursday 26th	10.30am	Knit & Natter
	2.00 – 4.00pm	Short Tennis (Upper Hall)
Friday 27th	10.00 – 11.30am	Writers Workshop
Saturday 28th	10.00am – 12.00pm	Charity Bake Sale – Chailey Heritage Foundation

List of Abbreviations							
AA	All-Age Worship						
AWC	All We Can Speaker						
B	Baptism						
CA	Christian Aid						
CC	Café Church						
CS	Contemporary Worship						
E	Ecumenical						
GF	Good Friday						
HC	Holy Communion						
LA	Local Arrangement						
MT	Maundy Thursday						
P	Parade Service						
PP	Praise Party						
PS	Palm Sunday						
WoW	Walk of Witness						

Plan Details for the Churches							
Date	Time	Chessington (70)	Kingston (75)	New Malden (78)	Surbiton Hill (105)		
01/03/2026	AM	Marai-Ogden: HC	D. Lloyd	Rutledge	Fullbrook		
	PM	No Service	No Service	No Service	Fullbrook: 4.30pm PP		
08/03/2026	AM	Vernon	Rutledge: HC	S. Lloyd	Marai-Ogden: HC		
	PM	No Service	No Service	No Service	No Service		
15/03/2026	AM	Marai-Ogden: MS	Rutledge: AA/MS/P	LA/MS	Bridges: MS		
	PM	No Service	Rutledge	No Service	No Service		
22/03/2026	AM	LA		Rutledge	LA		
	PM	No Service	No Service	No Service	No Service		
29/03/2026	AM	P. Han: PS	Rutledge: 10am E/PS	Bridges: PS	Marai-Ogden: PS		
	PM	No Service	No Service	No Service	No Service		
02/04/2026	PM	7.30pm E/MT	Rutledge: 6.30pm MT	No Service	Marai-Ogden: 7.30pm E/MT		
03/04/2026	AM		Rutledge: 10am WoW	9am WoW	10.30am GF/LA		
	PM	No Service	No Service	Rutledge: 8pm GF	No Service		
05/04/2026	AM	P. Han: 8am HC	No Service	Rutledge: 8.30am HC	No Service		
	PM	P. Han: 10am HC/KCF		Cooking: 10.30am AA/Hic			
12/04/2026	AM	LA	No Service	No Service	No Service		
	PM	No Service	No Service	No Service	No Service		
19/04/2026	AM	S. Lloyd: CS	Vernon	Rutledge	Marai-Ogden		
	PM	No Service	Rutledge	No Service	No Service		
26/04/2026	AM	D. Lloyd	Marai-Ogden: CC	Rutledge	Fullbrook		
	PM	No Service	No Service	No Service	No Service		
03/05/2026	AM	Marai-Ogden: B	Taylor	LA	Rutledge		
	PM	No Service	No Service	No Service	4.30pm PP		
10/05/2026	AM	Marai-Ogden: HC	Rutledge: CA/HC	D. Lloyd: CA	S. Han		
	PM	Circuit Service	Circuit Service	Circuit Service	Circuit Service		
17/05/2026	AM	S. Lloyd: CS	Bridges: AA	Rutledge: HC	Marai-Ogden		
	PM	No Service	Rutledge: HC	No Service	No Service		
24/05/2026	AM	LA	Rutledge	Taylor	Marai-Ogden: HC		
	PM	No Service	No Service	No Service	No Service		
31/05/2026	AM	Vernon	S. Lloyd	Marai-Ogden	LA		
	PM	No Service	No Service	No Service	No Service		

Ministers' Day Off: Karl and Vindra - Monday Circuit Meeting: 8pm on 12th March at New Malden