



MINI MACCLESFIELD MESSENGER

35th Issue: 24th January 2021

Please feel free to distribute 'Mini Messenger' to others who may find it of interest.

A message from the Superintendent

Dear Friends,

One of the gifts I was given at Christmas was a model kit. It was the Columbia and Eagle spacecraft from Apollo 11. As I built the model it brought back all kinds of memories from my (long lost) youth. I used to build lots of these kind of models with varying degrees of success. But it was the glue that I found most interesting as I made the model. It's called Polystyrene Cement. It works differently than most other glues which form a bond between the pieces, but can lose its effectiveness over time or be chipped away so that it loses its hold. Polystyrene Cement bonds the pieces together by melting them into one. In my youth this caused problems when some of the smaller pieces melted to nothing before I could put them where they were meant to go, or when I used too much glue which left the pieces a floppy dissolving mess. When it works though, it creates a strong bond between the different pieces of a model, by effectively making them one piece, not several held in place by glue.



As I reflected on glue, I began thinking about the nature of church communities, and what it is we strive to be. Too often I think, we are held together by glue – we just happen to go to the same place, or belong to the same circuit, and we are held together in that way. But that kind of 'glue' can lose its effectiveness, and it can be chipped away when we become too concerned with what we like and what we don't like, when we want things our way and can't see beyond. What we need is a kind of glue that bonds us together by truly making us one. Yes, each part is still unique, yes, each part is a different colour or shape, yes, each part has a different purpose, but each part is bonded to the others – not just stuck together but made one.

One of my favourite stories is of the time I was leading worship in a church in Yorkshire, and had the temerity to pick a hymn from Mission Praise. This did not please one worshipper who loudly slammed her copy of Hymns and Psalms shut and sat down with her arms folded! Moments like that chip away at the glue, and I

know that we all – me included – have our metaphorical hymn books that we sometimes long to slam. But those moments chip away at the glue, and we need to be something different - we are called to be something different. St Paul talks about the church as the body in 1 Corinthians - one body. The challenge of being one is hard, but it is something to aspire to – why? Because it models to the world what it is God asks of us, and where it is, we find the riches of God’s grace. As you read this letter the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is coming to an end. We know all the challenges of working with other churches, but we are called to offer something to the world – a way of living together despite differences, a way of being that is not torn apart by partisan divides, that is not shredded by different traditions and practices, that is not shattered by a belief that the only way is my way. We are called to be one – because that is the time when God’s light will be most clearly see in us, and a divided world will catch a glimpse of all God offers.

In the Inauguration for President Joe Biden this afternoon Amanda Gorman shared a



poem, a poem of hope – hope for this new Presidency, but more than that, the nature of hope that all people need. She said “there is always light, if only we’re brave enough to see it. If only we’re brave enough to be it”. God calls us to be the community of the church, to brave all the risks of true community -to know his grace and love and hope – so that in knowing it we might be it in this world that needs it so desperately.

“I pray” said Jesus “that they may be one” – may that be our prayer too.

With every blessing,
Graham

We are always pleased to receive articles for mini messenger and these are the words and views/ comments of the authors themselves. They may or may not represent the views of the Macclesfield Circuit of the Methodist Church.

Please keep collecting!

Please don’t forget other ways of giving! Church finances continue to be stretched, so if you haven’t already, why not set up a regular Standing Order?

And of course, don’t forget to Gift Aid if you can - it’s worth an extra 25% from HMRC for your church.

Your church Treasurer can let you know how you can help – they’d be delighted to hear from you!!!.

Children & Families

For those missing Sunday School, or if you know other children who may be interested, this week's focus is **John 2 v1-11 - the miracle of turning water into wine**. Resources are attached.

As mentioned last week we are starting to plan for the coming year with a Messy Valentines, Pancake Mania, Messy Easter, and Easter 'in a bag' (due to the success of nativity 'in a bag'). Look out for dates in future mini messenger.



In the meantime, I need help from all our lovely knitters out there. Included is a pattern for a knitted heart to be included in the Messy Valentine bags. If you can knit some, please can you let me have them by the 3rd of February.



A pattern is also included for the knitted cream egg chickens like the one in the picture for our Easter 'in a bag'. I would need these by the beginning of March.

If you can help, please can you contact me at methodistfamilies@gmail.com or 07901777506

Prayer – in our Circuit Prayer Cycle we remember Green Close this week. This prayer has been provided by Stephan Rudolfer.

Let us pray to our God, the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer of the Universe:

Lord, we come to You at this turbulent time of travail caused by the coronavirus. We have endured eleven months at the mercy of this vicious, unseen and indiscriminating virus. Many have lost their lives, with their loved ones unable to be with them at their bedside; some have suffered an agonising death, while others are left with long-term residual problems. The lonely are forced into ever-deeper loneliness through lockdown.

Glorious Father, You created the universe in love, and saw that it was good. Yet through sin and disobedience, evil came into what would otherwise have been a perfect place. We cry out to You for mercy on Your suffering humanity.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Lord Jesus, our loving Saviour, You bore our sins at Calvary, having endured three hours of choking agony on Your cross. Look with compassion on Your suffering children. Be with the dying, comfort their loved ones, and sustain those who care for them.

Christ, have mercy on us.

Holy Spirit, we thank You for being God's presence here on earth, and recall Your activity from the creation of the universe. Please inspire the scientists in their quest for vaccines to eliminate the pandemic.

Lord, have mercy.

Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we worship You and bow down before You. Thank You for hearing our prayers and cries for mercy.

God of hope, please fill us with all joy and peace as we trust in You. We make all these prayers to You in Jesus' Name and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Members' voice - by Ruth Gunning, Macclesfield

A Reflection on Social Distancing

'Social distancing' one of the new terms that have entered our daily conversation. The phrase encompasses what we need to do to protect ourselves and others. The term should be used sparingly, and maybe not at all, for language is a powerful shaper of thinking and just at this moment in time do we need a mindset of distancing ourselves from others?

Let's turn this round: each hand we have not been able to hold could be a phone call, each yearned for hug a verbal expression of love, each foot or metre we place between ourselves and others a thought as to how we might help that other should the need arise. If 'distancing' is taken literally then there is a price to pay in terms of our resilience and not just that even upon the integrity of our spiritual commitment. However, let us all stay safe and draw closer in a way that we may not have done before.

In the words of the hymn writer Bob Gillman

"Bind us together, Lord, bind us together

With chords that cannot be broken

Bind us together, Lord, bind us together

Bind us together with love."

Let us turn social distancing into an outpouring of understanding and love. We all have different needs, we all have different callings/abilities and these attributes compliment each other. May we look for the links that bridge the distance and look forward to a better tomorrow.

God Bless.

Could you write the next article?

We are looking to feature a contribution each week from a member of the congregation who would be willing to tell us what they are doing during these strange times – what are you watching/reading/making? Any tips to share with others? It would be lovely to hear from you! email: macclesfieldcircuit@gmail.com

Signs of Spring

Have you noticed how nature is quietly continuing its journey despite the pandemic chaotically changing our plans and paths?

You may already have seen bulbs starting to appear, the days are certainly starting to lengthen, new signs of hope.



Perhaps as we return to our lockdown routines of daily walks, you may spot a little bit of creation – please take a picture and let us **share some signs of Spring!**

Send us your pictures for sharing through Mini Messenger and let us celebrate the joy and beauty that is to come.



email: macclesfieldcircuit@gmail.com

YouTube

Our subscribers will now automatically get an alert when services have been put onto the YouTube channel.

If you haven't already subscribed, please do so at.....

<https://www.youtube.com/c/macclesfieldmethodistcircuit>

Just click on the red 'Subscribe' button on the top left of the screen and click 'sign in'. Or from the TV, on the YouTube page, under 'Subscriptions' click 'sign in'.

Subscribing doesn't cost anything as this is a free channel.

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Subscribing will mean you don't miss any services!!

Quest for Spirituality

Updates from Helen's Sabbatical: AS I WALK THROUGH THE VALLEYS..

(My visit to Glencoe)



The Three Sisters in the heart of Glencoe, my favourite place in the whole wide world! Every time I visit here I feel like I've come home. This is my happy place, one might say this is my nirvana. These mountains and valleys are like old friends, and I've yet to climb even one of these three magnificent peaks. There's a car park right where this photo is taken from with a wall for you to sit on and just gaze in wonder at these beautiful, majestic natural creations and - for me - it is like sitting in the doorway to heaven itself. So peaceful am I when I am here, you could leave me all day and I'd probably still be looking up at these wonders, admiring their beauty and vastness, along with feeling God's presence through this remotest of places, in a very real and uplifting way.



Glencoe was the last stop on my sabbatical, before we made our way home. We had two days in which to savour some of the delights of this glorious place. Camped at the bottom of the glen, I sat outside our motorhome on our first evening here with my OS map of the area and planned myself a wee walk up the glen. There are many walks in Glencoe and I'd researched

where I might find a relatively flat walk through the valley to the Three Sisters. On discovering a 5km stroll up the Old Road (that ran alongside the main road) sounded just perfect for little Koda and I so the next morning off we went....



It started off well. My map showed a track and here was a track so all good. We set off quite determinedly, delighted to be walking up the valley with mountains all around us, in the glorious sunshine and the whole day ahead of us. Dave dropped us off and went up the glen to park at our beauty spot beneath the Three Sisters,



where we would meet up again with him later. At least, that was the plan....

After about half an hour of walking I started to notice the track ahead disappeared at times into a muddy part and then reappeared. 'What harm can a bit of mud do?' I said to myself and soldiered on. The first quagmire wasn't too bad, only went ankle high so nothing to worry about, and we carried on. (Koda was loving every moment, skipping along without a care in the world whilst I squelched my way through the mud, hoping the path would reappear again soon).



All the time I could see the road about 50 yards to my left, but impossible to reach due to marshland all around us. Then I came to a fork in the track, something that wasn't showing on my OS map! The fork to the right was a clear path but took us further away from the road. Hmm. The fork to the left kept us heading in the right direction but looked rather muddy for a while. Choosing to stay in line with the road we took this way and started to wade through slightly deeper mud. At this point I began to wonder if we were actually where I thought we were as the write up for this walk had rated it 'easy, accessible and clearly marked', not 'challenging,

dangerous in parts and not recommended for the unseasoned walker.'



I got to a part in the muddy path where I really thought we should go a bit higher and find firmer ground (my limited orienteering training from my youth was echoing in my head at this point that we may be a bit 'off-track.')

To get to the higher ground required crossing a muddy puddle which didn't bother me as had waded through a few of these already (ankle deep) so with Koda in one arm and the map in the other I stepped into this puddle, in order to reach the higher ground. Except that this 'puddle' was actually over three

foot deep!!!!!!

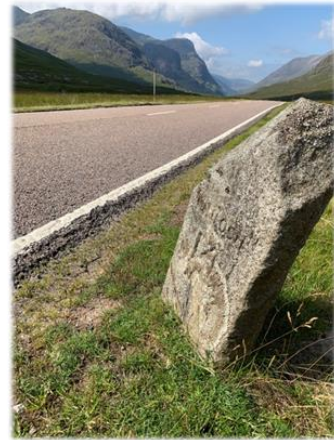
I found myself waist deep in mud, somehow holding Koda up over my head as I scrambled to get myself out of this mud pit before I fell any deeper in. To say I was a little bit scared and shaken afterwards would be an understatement. It absolutely terrified me as I realised I was not equipped to carry on along this so called 'path' that was looking just as muddy ahead as it was behind.



Having reached the higher ground and a little bit of track I followed it to the brook that was running down to the road (still only 50 yards away). Again my youthful orienteering training spoke in my head 'follow the stream', so I did. It looks shallow enough, doesn't it? Carrying Koda in my arms, we set off paddling at first, then wading as it got deeper (up to top of shins) but,

thankfully, it did lead us to the road. We climbed up and breathed a sigh of relief.

All we had to do now was walk up here to find Dave and then de-mud and sip hot tea. And here was my third dilemma – this road doesn't have any footpath and has lorries flying up and down it all the time. Looks empty here but only for a few seconds. I'd called Dave at this point to let him know we'd abandoned our 'lovely gentle walk' and, as I cried down the phone, said we were safely walking up the road and would be with him soon. Dave (bless him!) realised that just up from here around the corner there was actually nowhere to walk at all as was a set of very windy dangerous bends, so he (in his wisdom) decided to set off and meet me on the route.



This was unbeknown to sad little me who was wandering up the highway, hoping for an angel to appear to rescue me. I did meet another walker coming the other way who was most amused when he saw a bedraggled middle-aged woman, clutching her puppy and smelling of cow and sheep dung! I told him I was trying to get to the Three Sisters car park, explained my trauma (very dramatically of course!) and he offered to walk back with me to his car and then run me up to meet Dave. I was very close to accepting his kind offer when our motorhome sped around the corner and Dave waved for me to come and get in (he was not impressed that I had considered wandering off with a total stranger and getting in his car!.....).



Once 'saved' in the van my husband promptly sent me into the bathroom to change and de-gunge and then we went to our beauty spot where we sat on the wall and sipped some hot tea. I was quite shaken, annoyed with myself for taking the wrong path and also for not being prepared for bogs in a valley..... Sipping tea whilst watching walkers climb the mountains in front of us I began to unwind. A dear childhood friend of mine, Winnie-the-Pooh, went on a lot of adventures and some of them didn't go well. On one occasion he said *'I'm not lost for I know where I am. But however, where I am may be lost.'* That was how I'd felt when stuck in the mud, knowing where I was but not knowing how to get from where I was to where I needed to be.

There are times in all our lives when we walk through valleys and sometimes we get lost along the way, when we find ourselves on tracks we didn't mean to follow, roads that looked inviting and then turn out differently, or disappear completely. Some of us have had really scary times when we've felt like we were sinking into the quagmire around us and been shaken afterwards, making us wary of carrying on. My experience in Glencoe was literally in the valley, lost, scared and unsure how to get to safety. Help was never far away but in the moment it was hard to think straight and stay calm. Once I reached safety and re-read my notes on the route I'd taken I found the small print *'do not start further down the glen as this part of the road is very worn, difficult to follow I places **and can be treacherous**....'* You don't say!

Even in the hardest of times I believe God is with us – the God on the mountain is still the God in the valley. As the psalmist said: *'Even though I walk through the darkest valley,¹ I fear no evil; for you are with me'* (Psalm 23). I believe God guided me to the stream, God reassured me when I began to panic that the right road was not far away, he steered my husband to come and find me. I didn't give up and phone the mountain rescue team (although the thought did cross my mind!). Instead I hoped and prayed that I'd get back to where I should be if I stepped carefully (and didn't jump into bogs without checking their depth first) and tried to remain calm. I felt like a silly old bear, but I was never alone.

'What should happen if you forget about me?' asked Pooh.

'Silly old bear, I won't ever forget about you,' said Christopher Robin.

So too it is with God. The God on the mountain is still the God in the valley. Take care on planning your routes through life but fear not, for even in the valleys, God will never forget about you, you will never be alone.

From one silly old bear, God be with you all till we meet again, Helen

To read more of Helen's journey, visit her blog: www.questforspirituality.com

Community....

Mission in Britain

Normally at this time of year I would be arranging a service with Mission in Britain in mind. It all fell apart last year as COVID-19 got in the way. I usually place envelopes on the chairs in church so that anyone who wishes to support this cause have that opportunity. I can't do that this year so if anyone would like to make a donation, I would be happy to receive cheques made payable to Mission In Britain. If you call me on 01625 421188 we can arrange for me to collect or for you to post it.

I hope all those folk who have collecting boxes have continued to collect. It is time now for me to collect them. Please let me know on the above number if you would like me to call for it or if you could send a cheque for the amount.

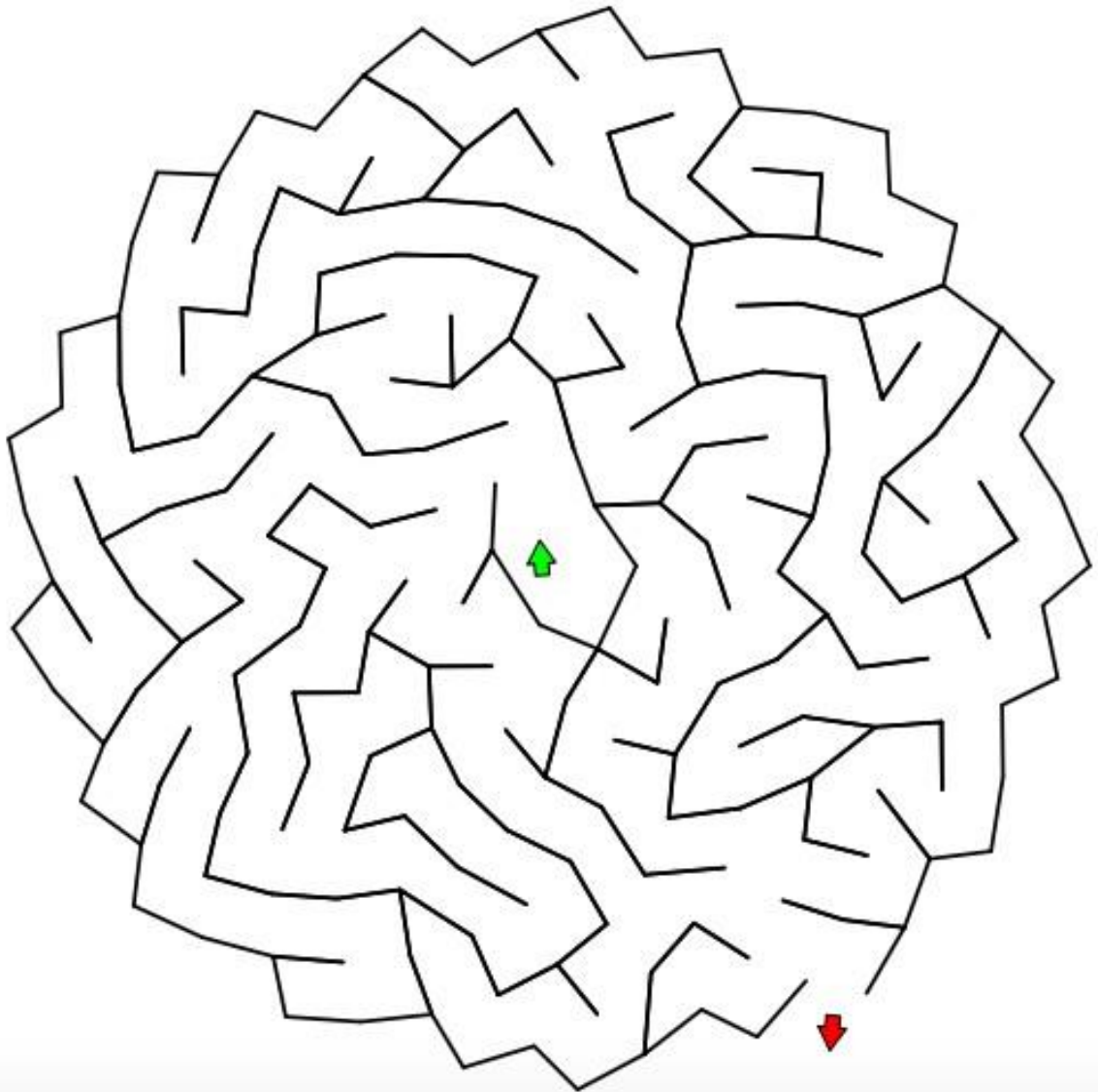
I shall be trying to fund raise throughout the year, and as last year I have started to make marmalade. I have quite a lot ready now so if you would like some please let me know and we can arrange collection or delivery.

I have already sown my begonia seeds so hopefully I will have some for sale later in the year.

Best wishes to all Ann Moss, Macclesfield

Just for fun!

Can you find your way out of the Maze?



Parish Pump

Fancy baking?

This week's recipe is inspired by Burns Night (25th January)

The full ritual of the night involves whisky, haggis and poetry readings. Those who partake are piped in and then The Selkirk Grace – the prayer of thanks attributed to Burns – is said before dinner.

The prayer goes:

*Some hae meat and canna eat,
And some wad eat that want it;
But we hae meat, and we can eat
Sae let the Lord be thankit.*

Selkirk Bannock

A bannock usually refers to a large, flattish round loaf. In the past it would have been a simple unleavened bread baked on a griddle but this version from the Borders town of the same name is baked in the oven. Serve sliced and buttered.

500g strong white bread flour	175ml milk
5g salt	125ml water
60g caster sugar	200g sultanas
7g sachet instant yeast	50g mixed candied peel
80 unsalted butter, diced & softened	
1 egg, lightly beaten with 1 tsp milk or water to glaze	

Put the flour in a large bowl and add the salt & sugar on one side, the yeast on the other. Add the butter to the centre of the bowl and rub it into the flour with your fingertips.

Add the milk and half the water then turn the mixture round with the fingers of one hand. Add the remaining water a little at a time, continuing to mix until you have taken in all the flour from the side of the bowl and the dough is soft and slightly sticky; you might not need all the water.

Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Knead the dough well for at least 5 minutes, working through the initial wet stage until it is smooth and no longer sticky. Lightly oil the bowl, return the dough to it and cover with cling film. Leave to rise for at least an hour until doubled in size – anything from 1-3 hours.

Line a baking tray with baking parchment. Add the sultanas and candied peel to the dough and knead them in. Tip the dough onto a lightly floured surface and knead briefly.

Shape the dough into a bannock – a round dome about 20cm in diameter. Place on the lined tray, put in a plastic bag and leave to prove for about an hour, until doubled in size.

Heat the oven to 220c/Gas 7. Brush the top and sides of the bannock with beaten egg and bake for 10 minutes. Lower the oven setting to 190c/gas 5 and bake for a further 25 minutes until the loaf is a deep brown colour and sounds hollow when tapped underneath. Transfer to a wire rack to cool.

**Please send us your photos of your finished bakes!
Have you any favourite recipes to share?
email: macclesfieldcircuit@gmail.com**

SERVICE LINKS & CONTACTS

Sunday 24 January

AM – Morning worship led by Graham

WATCH ONLINE : tiny.cc/epiphany3

The Reading is John 2: 1-11

LISTEN.....DIAL IN - 01625 786346 (Available from 10am Sun)

FACEBOOK..... : <https://www.facebook.com/MacclefieldCircuit/>

YOUTUBE..... <https://www.youtube.com/c/macclesfieldmethodistcircuit>

PM – Live Evening Prayer Service at 6.30pm – **Special theme for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**

JOIN ONLINE..... Join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88677436411>

Meeting ID: 886 7743 6411

Dial by your location

+44 203 051 2874 United Kingdom

+44 203 481 5240 United Kingdom

+44 203 481 5237 United Kingdom

+44 131 460 1196 United Kingdom

Meeting ID: 886 7743 6411

LISTEN.....DIAL IN - 0203 051 2874 or 0203 481 5237 & and when asked, input the Meeting ID: 886 7743 6411

Services coming up.....

31 January - Helen

7 February - Ros

A [FREE phone service](#) to hear prayers and news from the **Methodist Church** has been launched.

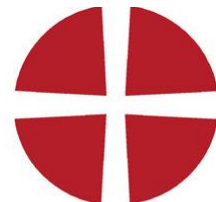


FREE phone lines for prayers and news from the Methodist Church

Listen to a **prayer**: 0808 281 2514

Listen to **news**: 0808 281 2478

Content is updated weekly on Thursday afternoon



A free phone line of hymns, reflections and prayers

Are you in need of some daily hope during this lockdown? The **Church of England** have a new FREE telephone line for you to ring to hear comforting hymns, daily prayers and reflections.

Circuit Facebook page

For the latest information on what is happening within the circuit, follow....

<https://www.facebook.com/MacclefieldCircuit/>

Other important links

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/coronavirus-guidance/>

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

<https://www.methodistchurch.org.uk/MWoL>

Contact Details

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Rev Helen Byrne

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Email: helenmethodist@gmail.com

Rev Ros Watson

Tel: 01625 872060

Email: ros.watson@methodist.org.uk
