

Dear Friends

Ahead of my retirement, as I write to you for the last time I am reminded of the words below that Paul wrote to the Church in Colossae, and I reproduce them as my sentiment to you at this time.

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people...

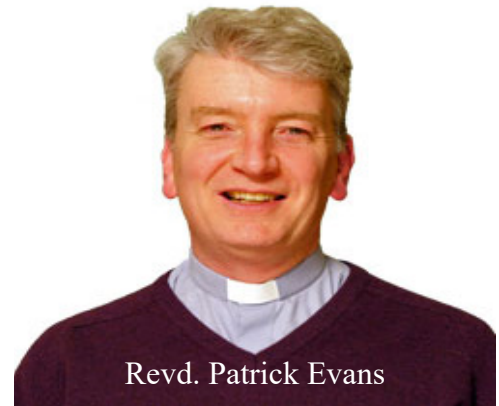
We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. (*Colossians Ch 1 vs 3-4 & 9b-12 - NIV*)

Given Paul's (Saul's) background and previous life, I wonder how his words were received by the recipients, for they either knew first hand or had heard of him of old.

In my career before Methodist ministry I was "sent" by my previous employers to Cheshire, Manchester, Yorkshire and then back to Liverpool (we are now in our seventh home in 35 years!). I am an oddity in Methodism in that I have always served as a minister in my sending Circuit, and even in the year of my ordination the Methodist Conference was in Southport. Leading up to my ordination our then Superintendent Minister, Rev Tim Hall, was keen for my ordination to be at Leyland Road and so it turned out to be. The then minister of Leyland Road, Rev Peter Knight, was my ordination supporting minister. I stand on the shoulders of giants.

I thank you for your great endurance and patience in receiving the ministry I have been able to offer, despite having experience of the past Patrick! Thank you for graciously receiving me.

One of the passages of scripture that I often return to



Revd. Patrick Evans

comes later in Paul's letter to the people of Colossae.

So, chosen by God for this new life of love, dress in the wardrobe God picked out for you: compassion, kindness, humility, quiet strength, discipline. Be even-tempered, content with second place, quick to forgive an offence. Forgive as quickly and completely as the Master forgave you. And regardless of what else you put on, wear love. It's your basic, all-purpose garment. Never be without it. (*Colossians Ch 3 vs 12-14 - The Message*)

I think of this passage as I prepare for what the day ahead may entail. My wardrobe has clerical shirts in their own section. On certain occasions I am very particular which shirt I wear. I've been fortunate to have inherited many clerical shirts from those who have gone before me. In wearing them I seek to take something of the original owners Spiritual encouragement with me, perhaps to a particular funeral, a potentially daunting meeting or a service of celebration.

I love this passage because it focuses on our being rather than our doing. We can have the best initiatives and programmes as a church, but if we do not dress ourselves as Paul suggests, it will all be in vain. Equally, if we dress as Paul has indicated, then whatever we do, however small we may perceive it to be, we will not labour in vain, for it will shine brightly as light upon a hill. As a Circuit, as you think towards the future, I really don't think God is particularly concerned by what you choose to do, rather God's heart lies in the manner in which you do it...a manner which draws others, not towards the Church, rather towards his love and saving grace.

I'll leave the last words to Paul...

'See to it that you complete the ministry you have received in the Lord.' Grace be with you. (*Colossians Ch 4 vs 17 and 18b*)

Patrick

The Mission of the Southport Methodist Circuit is to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ by inspiring, encouraging, resourcing and enabling the people and churches of the Circuit to serve and transform their communities and the wider world.

Circuit Meeting Update

News from the Circuit Meeting that was held on Thursday 25th June is as follows:

Changes in Pastoral Charges - Just to confirm, we were unfortunately unsuccessful in appointing a minister to replace the Rev Patrick Evans, although we will go back into the stationing process for next year, seeking an appointment from September 2027. Positively, the re-invitation process for Rev Shiela Prest and Rev Ernie Grimshaw has been completed, and we are delighted that, in line with their wishes, Sheila is re-invited through to August 2030, and Ernie to August 2029. These are open invitations so both can request to remain beyond those dates, subject to Circuit approval.

From September 2026, the ministerial pastoral charges will be as follows:

Rev Chris Humble (Superintendent Minister) Ainsdale Methodist Church, Lord Street West United Church (shared with Rev Hilary Smith (URC)), The Church of St Francis of Assisi (shared with Rev Pat Willis (Anglican)), St Philip & St Paul with Wesley (shared with Rev Rachel Bray (Anglican)).

Rev Sheila Prest - Formby Methodist Church.

Rev Ernie Grimshaw - Cornerstone Methodist Church, Leyland Road Methodist Church, Liverpool Road Methodist Church, and Russell Road Methodist Church.

As a reminder, Chris works 6 days a week, Sheila works 3 days, and Ernie works 4.5 days. Please pray for all our Ministers and our congregations during this time of change.

Listening Events - Thank you to everyone who has been part of the recent discerning process within churches, and to members of the Church Councils. We, the Circuit Leadership Team, greatly value the time you have invested and how you have grappled with the various options under consideration.

We share with you the outcome of the Church Council confirming votes in the table overleaf.

As a summary, please note the following:

1. Two churches voted for Option 1 as their first and

only choice, namely Formby and Russell Road.

2. All of the other seven churches voted as their first choice for one of the options that form a hub of some description, namely Option 2, 3a and 3b.

3. Four churches also voted for one of the options that would create a single Methodist Church for the Southport Circuit, namely options 4, 5a and 5b, although it was not the first choice of any of these churches. These options are not viable given that only four churches voted for them.

4. Options 3a and 3b are not viable as three hubs of three churches, given that two churches have voted for Option 1 only. This leaves Option 2 as the viable option to proceed with.

5. Two churches voted for either Option 3a or 3b, but not Option 2, namely Cornerstone and St Francis.

The following proposal was agreed:

Proceed with considering hubs via Option 2 with Ainsdale, Liverpool Road, Leyland Road, PPW and LSWUC. Invite Cornerstone and St Francis to participate in the Option 2 process on the basis it may still accommodate their preference for a hub, although not in the exact format they ideally voted for.

As a next step, the Circuit will engage a trained/experienced facilitator to support churches from September onwards, with a gathering of the relevant churches in October (post-autumn church councils).

The Bridge Parish Nursing Project - A powerful account was shared of how the Bridge Project, operating out of Leyland Road and led by Parish Nurses, Debs Attwater and Kathryn Simpkin-Watkinson, is having a positive impact in the community. Deb's shared how they were helping young people understand their autism, to support those suffering from self-harm, and are seeing pupils return to school who were struggling with attending school regularly. When funding is in place it is hoped that a 'Bridge Lounge' will be started for those unable to attend school.

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Option	Church	For/Against	Preference
Option 1 - Churches remain "as is".	Formby	19-2	First & Only Choice
	Liverpool Rd	9-6	Second Choice
	Russell Rd	9-1	First & Only Choice
Option 2 - Create hubs where possible, as individual churches determine.	Ainsdale	11-0	First Choice (Joint)
	Liverpool Rd	11-4	First Choice
	Leyland Rd	12-6	Second Choice
	PPW	13-0	First & Only Choice
	LSWUC	14-6	First Choice
Option 3a - Create a 3-hub model; all chapels remain open.	Ainsdale	12-1	First Choice (Joint)
	Cornerstone	15-0	First Choice
	Liverpool Rd	8-7	Third Choice
	St Francis	7-2	First Choice
Option 3b - Create a 3-hub model, with the 3 chapels reducing to 1.	Leyland Rd	16-2	First Choice
	LSWUC	14-8	Second Choice
Option 4 - Circuit becomes a single Church.	Cornerstone	10-1	Second Choice
	St Francis	6-3	Second Choice
Option 5a - Circuit becomes 1 church on 1 worship site, all sites close	LSWUC	12-8	Third Choice
Option 5b - Circuit becomes 1 church on 1 worship site, and some chapels remain open for community outreach.	Leyland Rd	11-7	Third Choice

THE WORSHIPFUL, THE MAYOR OF SEFTON,
COUNCILLOR JEN CORCORAN

INVITES YOU TO JOIN HER AND OTHER DIGNATORIES AT
ST PHILIP & ST PAUL WITH WESLEY

SUNDAY **6** AT 3 PM
SEPTEMBER

*The Mayor of Sefton's
Civic Sunday Service*

The G:Force Gospel Choir and some of our school-children
will be taking part in this community celebration.

Refreshments will be served after the service in the St Paul's Hall

Please RSVP to stppw.office@gmail.com to give us an idea of numbers

 **TABLE TOP SALE**
Lord Street West United Church

SATURDAY 25TH JULY 2026

Indoor Tables - £10
Outdoor Tables - £5

Please bring OWN gazebo in case of rain

Free admission

PARKING NOTICE: Please ensure all non stall holders pay and display when parking.



Refreshments will be on sale during the event.
To book a table or for more information
please email -
lordstreetwestunited@gmail.com

 **Cornerstone
BRUNCH** 

Saturday 18th July
10.30am - 1.00pm



**Roundelay Choir
Celebrating 40 Years of Song**

Back in 1986, Mrs. Pamela Horswood at Cornerstone Methodist Church had a bright idea. After careful research, she placed an advertisement in the local newspaper looking for anyone interested in singing—even those who hadn't sung since their school days. The only requirement? Being able to sing in tune (which, of course, always helps!). A small group of enthusiastic people responded, and the Roundelay Choir was born, holding its very first practice right in Pam's living room.

For the first several years, the choir performed entirely a cappella. This was a matter of necessity, as Pam found it impossible to play the piano accompaniment and conduct the choir at the same time! Sadly, after 23 years of dedicated leadership, Pam hung up her baton to take a well-earned retirement. However, the music didn't stop. Roundelay has continued to flourish to this day under the excellent leadership of our talented Musical Director, Mrs. Alison Davies with many members from our Methodist community.

Now, Roundelay is proudly preparing to celebrate 40 years of song with a special anniversary concert. The performance will be held in aid of Queenscourt Hospice at Leyland Road Church on Monday, 13th July @ 7.30pm. Its free Admission and would love for you to come along, join in and share a piece of birthday cake with us!



Join us as we celebrate
**the 50th Anniversary of
Lord Street West United Church**
as a **Local Ecumenical Partnership**
between the **Methodist Church**
and **United Reformed Church**.



**11.00am, Sunday 30th August
at Lord Street West United Church.**

The service led by **Rev Hilary Smith**
and the Preacher will be **Rev Chris Humble**.

This is a joint service of the Southport Methodist Circuit
and the Southport & Formby URC Team Ministry.

Circuit Service to mark the

Retirement

of

Rev Patrick Evans

*Join us as we say our farewells
to Patrick as his ministry as a
Circuit Minister comes to an end.*

♥



**Sunday
26th July**



4pm



**Ainsdale
Methodist Church**

≡ *Everyone is invited* ≡

The service will be followed by a faith tea.



