

LYNDON MAGAZINE



**JULY &
AUGUST 2025**



Lyndon Methodist Church



MINISTER IN PASTORAL CHARGE

Rev Karen Webber

Contact Tel 07505 109287



LYNDON ROOM HIRE

Contact via

Tel: 07930 617301

Email via

lyndonmethodist@btconnect.com

STEWARD TEAM

Contact via

Tel: 07930 617301

Email via

lyndonmethodist@btconnect.com

MAGAZINE EDITOR

Lynne Tyler

Email via

lyndonmethodist@btconnect.com

Website

<https://lyndonmethodist.org.uk>

Charity No: 1150167

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The opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Ministerial team or the Editor

MINISTER'S LETTER

Dear Friends

As the days grow longer and the sun warms our skin and our spirits, I find myself in a state of reflection. This will be my last summer with you as your minister. In September I take up the role of Pioneer Minister within the Circuit. So, I wanted to take the time to pause, breathe, and simply say: thank you



Summer has always felt like a time of change. The school year ends, people go on holiday and the pace of life shifts. It's a season when we move from the busy into the slower, from routine into rest. And for me, this summer brings a bigger change — the end of my time serving here, and the beginning of a new chapter. Leaving is not easy. I've grown to love you all very much. But just like the seasons, life moves forward. We're not meant to stay in one place forever. And that's okay. Sometimes, the most faithful thing we can do is to let go when it's time.

From the first time I walked through the church doors at Lyndon, I felt the warmth of your welcome. You didn't just give me a role; you gave me a place. You shared your lives with me: the joyful moments, the sad ones and the ordinary ones in between. You let me sit beside you in hospitals. You let me pray with you at gravesides. You let me eat cake with you in the coffee lounge and we've laughed at my sometimes-chaotic services. And somehow, in all of this, you helped me feel not just like your minister, but like I belonged. There is something so powerful about being part of a church family that really shows up for one another. Thank you for making space for me.

One thing I've learned here is that church isn't just a building, or a Sunday service, it's the way we show up for each other. It's the flowers dropped off for someone going through a hard time. It's the listening ear over a cup of tea. It's the quiet person who stays behind to stack chairs or clear up after lunch club. It's the small acts of love that build something big. Thank you for showing me that. I've seen Christ in you, not just in your worship, but in your kindness, your patience, and your courage to keep going when life is hard. You've reminded me again and again that God isn't far away. God is here, in all of this.

The reality of ministry is that we don't always get it right. We make mistakes. We miss opportunities. There are things we often wish we had done better or said differently. But here's the thing: you never expected me to be perfect. You gave me room to learn and grow. You let me be human. And in that, you gave me something very precious, the kind of grace that doesn't just talk about forgiveness but lives it. Thank you for your patience, your humour, and your open heartedness. I'll carry it with me.

I've come to believe that life is full of both holding on and letting go. Sometimes, we hold on to the people and places that shape us. Other times, we let go and trust that what we've shared doesn't disappear, it just takes a new shape. That's how I feel now. I'm letting go of the role I've had here. But I'm holding on to the memories, the lessons, the relationships and the love. And I hope you'll hold on too — to what we've shared, to what you've learned, and most of all, to one another.

You are a strong, loving, thoughtful community. I have no doubt that you will be more than okay.

A new season is coming, not just for me, but for you too. A new minister, new energy, new ideas. That can be exciting, and it can also be scary. But know this, God is already there, preparing the way. Keep being who you are. Keep welcoming people. Keep asking questions. Keep praying honestly. Keep laughing. Keep caring for your neighbours. Keep turning up, even when you don't feel like it. Because that's where church really happens. And don't forget, God's love doesn't come and go with ministers. It stays, and it grows, and it leads you forward.

Thank you so much for everything. You have shaped me, supported me, and shared Christ with me in countless ways. I will carry you with me always.

May you walk into this next chapter with open hearts.

May you trust that God is already in what comes next.

May your faith be real and honest — not perfect but rooted.

May you continue to be a place of welcome, kindness, and hope.

And may you know, in the deepest part of your being,

that you are loved — by God, by each other, and yes, by me.

With love and deep thankfulness,

Go Well, Karen



The Book of Psalms – part 1

At our monthly Bible Study and prayer group meeting on 4 June 2025 we began our reading of the Psalms, so it seemed appropriate to write an article on them.

What are the Psalms?

They are a collection of songs and prayers which express the emotion and human experiences of everyday life. Some are a paean of praise to God. Others an outpouring of confession or an expression of grief or confusion over what is being experienced in life. Some writers do not hold back on expressing their feelings of frustration and anger with God. In these Psalms the writers express exactly what they think or feel.



Unlike other books of the Bible, Psalms do not record historical events, but it is obvious from some that they have been written after an historical event or experience. An example of this is Psalm 57 which was written by David after he had fled from Saul and was seeking refuge in the cave of Abdullam. (1 Samuel 22 v1-5). Psalms 51 and 32 are penitential psalms which David wrote following his adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband Uriah. (2 Samuel 11 and 12 v 1-23)

The book of Psalms is the longest book in the Bible.

In Hebrew the word “psalms” means twang or pluck, which is probably a reference to the stringed instruments which were used to accompany the singing of the psalm.

When were the Psalms written?

They were written over a period of about 800 years. The earliest is Psalm 90 which is attributed to Moses and would have been written about 1300 BC. The majority were written at the time of David, around 1000 BC. The latest ones were written about 500 BC after the return from the 70-year exile in Babylon and the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem.

The style of the Psalms

They were written in the style of Hebrew poetry. In the course of translation this style has been lost.

Due to the poetic style of the psalms, they cannot be analysed verse by verse like much of scripture but have to be read and pondered over and then read again.

In the original Hebrew, six psalms were acrostic. (25,34,111,112,119,145) This means that the first letter of each line when read vertically spells a word, name or phrase.

Psalms 119, which is the longest psalm with 176 verses, is one of the acrostic psalms. It has 22 sections which are really verses. Each of these sections is given the heading of a letter of the Hebrew alphabet and the first letter of each line begins with the letter at the top of the section. Obviously, it was impossible to reflect this in translation.

The verse numbers we have in our bibles were an editorial addition very much later and were inserted to make it easier to refer to portions of the text.

The length of the psalms varies enormously from psalm 117 which has 2 verses to psalm 119 which has 176 verses.

Who wrote the 150 Psalms?

David	73
Solomon	2
Sons of Korah	10
Asaph	12
Others	1
Moses	1
Anonymous	51

Total	150
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The names of Korah and Asaph will not be as familiar as those of David and Solomon.

Korah was a Levite who led a rebellion against Moses and Aaron and was killed when something akin to an earthquake swallowed him and others. (Numbers 16 v1-40). Generations later his descendants were appointed to serve God in the temple worship. It was customary to refer to later generations as being sons of an ancestor.

The Levites were the tribe set apart to be responsible for the worship and administration of the Tabernacle and then the Temple. David told the leaders of the Levites to appoint other Levites as musicians to make a joyful noise with musical instruments. Among those appointed was Asaph (1 Chronicles 15 v16-17). He was the grandson of Samuel the prophet and prophesied himself.

It remains a mystery as to why a number of great songs or psalms recorded in the Old Testament have not been included by any of the compilers of the 5 books of psalms referred to below.



Kinnor player by an unknown engraver, 1350-1150 BCE. Excavated at Tel Megiddo, a royal city in the Kingdom of Israel.

Examples of those omitted are:

Song of Moses and Miriam after crossing the Red Sea. Ex.15 v10-21

Song of Hannah after leaving Samuel at the tabernacle. 1 Sam. 2 v1-10

Song of the vineyard. Isaiah. 5 v1-7

The five books of Psalms

What appears in our bibles as the book of Psalms is a collection of five books. It is not known why this is so. Suggestions have been made that the psalms may have been written on five scrolls or that they were collected by five different people.

Each of the five books is a collection of psalms which are arranged in no particular order, either chronologically or by subject.

Book 1- Psalms 1-41

These were mainly written by David. Many speak of humanity as being blessed, fallen and redeemed by God.

Book 2- Psalms 43-72

The majority of these were written by the sons of Korah and some by David. A theme which runs through them is that of God's Covenant with Israel which rescued it from Egypt.

Book 3 - Psalms 73-89

Asaph and his descendants were the main writers of this collection. Many are songs of praise to God and others speak of his relationship with humanity.

Book 4 - Psalms 90-106

Most of these psalms are anonymous. The theme here is that God is present above us and that his sovereignty and power are available to us.

Book 5 - Psalms 107-150

Of these, 15 were written by David. The theme of this section is the presence of God among us. In the main these psalms are anthems of praise to be used in worship.

The last psalm in each of the five books ends with a doxology and the whole of psalm 150 is a paean of praise.

Psalms 120-134 are headed "Psalms of Ascent" as they were sung by pilgrims as they climbed 2,100 feet from the pool of Siloam and up the steps to the temple in Jerusalem which was built 2,430 feet above sea level on Mount Moriah.

In the next issue we shall be looking at headings and instructions given above some psalms, how psalms were used in Jewish worship and psalms in the Christian Church.

Barry Davis

Prayer For July & August

Please pray for all peoples, at home and abroad who are suffering from financial difficulties, war, hunger, homelessness, lack of medical facilities, trafficking and other forms of exploitation. We continue to pray particularly for the people of Ukraine, Israel and Palestine and those in power involved in discussions which we hope will lead to a lasting peace so that the wasteful destruction of people, property and land is ended and people can once more live without fear. We remember the sacrifice of the Allied forces during the 1939 - 1945 war as we commemorate VJ80 day in August and pray that their sacrifice was not in vain and that the peoples of the world can live in peace.



For people facing fires, floods, eruptions and earthquakes caused by climate change as well as for those in the emergency services facing danger as they go to help others. Help us to think about what we can do, however small, to reduce the impact of climate change on the wonderful world that has been created for us by God.

We pray for those in our community who are unwell or facing uncertainty as they wait for test results. We think of those in hospital or undergoing treatment and pray that you will support them and their families and guide the hands of the medical experts as they work to bring people back to full health.

We pray that you will be with those who are facing the end of their lives and that you will also be with their friends and families as well as those who mourn.

We pray for those members of our congregation who, for whatever reason, are unable to join us in our acts of worship. May they know that they are still in our hearts and minds.

We pray for our minister, Rev Karen Webber and thank you for her service at Lyndon. We ask that you will support her as she moves into her new role, and continues with the work that you have planned for her.

We also pray for our new minister, Rev Joseph Ribeiro and his new family as they make plans to leave their current home and come to join us. May they feel welcome and ready to lead your work in our church.

We also pray this month for Helen Cook, our student as she moves to her new role in Weald of Kent Circuit. May she feel your love and support surrounding her as she starts in her new role as Deacon.

Pray for our services in July and August and all those that lead them.

We continue to pray for all those volunteers that help our services to run smoothly.

Amen

Mission Action Plan Summary

for the Birmingham Methodist Circuit

Following the Annual Church meeting held on 18th May, Rev Karen has asked me to include the Mission Action Plan for the Birmingham Methodist Circuit in this month's magazine. This was presented at the February 2025 Circuit meeting which was reported on in the last magazine. As the report is about 17 pages long, I have summarised it here. If anybody wants to see the full report, please contact me in the usual ways.

Overview

The Birmingham Methodist Circuit was formed in 2011, bringing together several Methodist circuits around Birmingham city centre. Over time, the circuit has experienced various challenges and developments, prompting the need for a structured Mission Action Plan to guide its next steps.

Vision & Priorities

The circuit aspires to be a welcoming Christian family focused on inspiring worship, radical compassion, and social justice. To achieve this, five priorities have been identified:

1. Transforming Life
2. Inspiring Worship
3. Radical Compassion
4. Social Justice
5. A Methodist Perspective (working collaboratively while upholding Methodist heritage)

Key Areas for Development

The plan outlines eight areas requiring focused efforts in the next 2-3 years:

1. Working together effectively – Strengthening communication and connections within the circuit.
2. Supporting local worship and mission – Ensuring accessible and impactful worship.
3. Sustaining leadership and participation – Encouraging realistic expectations and well-being for ministers, employees, and volunteers.
4. Doing fewer things well – Prioritizing activities strategically while balancing sustainability.
5. Developing the faith of young people – Strengthening youth engagement through various initiatives.
6. Beginning new forms of church – Exploring new outreach and faith-building models.

7. Acting for justice, dignity, and solidarity – Advancing inclusivity, equality, and social justice.

8. Reducing harm to the natural environment – Promoting sustainability and eco-conscious practices.

Implementation & Monitoring

- A Development Support Group will oversee progress.
- Each development area will have a detailed action plan reviewed periodically.
- A comprehensive review is expected during the 2028/29 connexional year.

Closing Commitments

The leadership team commits to values of teamwork, shared leadership, gratitude, and prayer. The circuit welcomes participation from those interested in contributing to the development efforts.

The Mission Statement is seen as a guideline so that each church can adapt it to meet their local needs and in this connection a Circuit Support Group exist to work alongside local Churches to offer guidance and support.

Thought for the Month



“ Rivers do not drink their own water; trees do not eat their own fruit; the sun does not shine on itself and flowers do not spread their fragrance for themselves. Living for others is a rule of nature. We are all born to help each other. No matter how difficult it is...Life is good when you are happy; but much better when others are happy because of you. ”

Pope Francis

 /TandagDiocese

West Midlands District News



As was mentioned in last month's magazine, it was hoped that by September there would be a new enlarged district in place, and it is now almost certainly going to happen as has been reported on the Birmingham District website, as below.

On Saturday, 20th April, the Synods of both the Wolverhampton & Shrewsbury and the Birmingham Districts confirmed their support for the formation of a new combined West Midlands District from 1st September 2025. The voting figures were 81% and 94% in favour respectively. These results, together with the voting figures from the Circuits, will go forward in a process which will result in a recommendation to be voted upon by the Methodist Conference in June. However, given the amount of work needing to be done to prepare a good foundation for the new District, the Joint Districts' Task Group will now work on the basis that the Conference will also agree to a merger.



Rev'd Rachel Deigh has been nominated as Chair for the new West Midlands Methodist District, following a prayerful and unanimous decision by trustees. Currently serving as a mission partner in Sierra Leone, Rachel brings 25 years of diverse ministry experience and a collaborative vision for our District's future. Her appointment, pending approval at Synods and Conference in 2025, would begin on 1 September 2025, with Rev'd Novette Headley continuing as Chair for the first year to ensure a smooth transition.



The aim of the new West Midlands Methodist District is to become a growing, evangelistic, justice-seeking and inclusive church without walls.

Work now is going ahead in earnest and the task group who is leading on setting up the new district are in the photo below:



L-R:

Rev'd Rachel Parkinson (Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury District Chair)

Adam Sanders (Birmingham District Mission Advisor)

Rev'd Ken Howcroft (Supernumerary Minister, Birmingham District)

Rev'd Novette Headley (Birmingham District Chair)

Andrew Beattie (Former Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury Synod Secretary)

Norma Bryan (Circuit Steward, Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury District)

Jo Yair (Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury Mission and Ministry Coordinator)

Helen Woodall (Birmingham Synod Secretary)

Rev'd Phil Warrey (Birmingham District Deputy Chair)

Rev'd Margaret Eales (Supernumerary Minister, Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury District)

Other members of the task group not present in the photo: Rev'd Neil Bishop (Birmingham District Treasurer), Ade Johnson (Development Manager, Coventry Central Hall), Deacon Carys Woodley (Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury District)

However, there are still plenty of opportunities for you to get involved. On the West Midlands District website (<https://www.wmmethodists.org.uk>), there are details of potential vacancies, both paid and unpaid which currently include:

Synod Secretary

Finance Officer

Manse Roles

Resourcing Mission Committee Roles

There will also be a special service to celebrate the Launch of the new West Midlands district and to welcome the new Chair, Rev'd Rachel Deigh.

This will take place on Saturday 30th August at 3pm at Walsall Central Hall, followed by refreshments.

As part of this service, they are forming a scratch choir to lead the congregational singing and also singing a feature item in the service.



No prior singing experience required

No expectation on reading music (printed music will be provided for those who prefer to read)

They are asking that people attend at least one rehearsal and then the rehearsal and event on the day (30th August).

There are many dates on the website, but the one closest to Lyndon is:

Monday 28th July 7pm – 9pm

Shirley Methodist Church

257 Stratford Road, Shirley, Solihull, B90 3AL

Saturday 30th August Rehearsal: 11:30am – 12:30pm Service: 3pm – 4:30pm

Walsall Central Hall

Central Hall, Ablewell St, Walsall WS1 2EQ

Book in by emailing the Birmingham District office saying which rehearsal(s) you are to be attending office@birminghammethodist.org.uk

The District exists to:



Enable churches to flourish



Connect people



Evolve with the changing picture of methodism



Initiate new work



Challenge the status quo

As the prayer shared by both Synods on Saturday acknowledged, these votes are not the end of the story. However we voted, or would have voted, we pray that the Spirit will bind us one to another so that we may travel the road ahead together and in love.

World War II Commemorations 2025

As it was 80 years this year since the first day that VE day was commemorated, there were many different events taking place all over the country.

Locally there were many musical events, street parties and decorations in all the shops, and nationally there was a week long series of events including a military procession in London on 5th May culminating in a spectacular flypast at Buckingham Palace, a service of thanksgiving at Westminster Abbey on the morning of 8th May attended by many veterans and members of the Royal family, followed by a live concert from Horse Guards Parade on the evening of 8th May with many different starts of stage and screen taking place.



Even at Lyndon on 11th May, the flowers in the church reflected the VE80 commemorations and Barry and Brenda talked at the start of his service about what they remembered of the street parties and celebrations that they had attended at the first VE (Victory in Europe) celebrations.

At the end of May, we were also reminded of the 85th anniversary of Operation Dynamo, the rescue of more than 338,000 British and Allied troops from the beaches of Dunkirk in late May and early June of 1940 which was achieved by about 850 independently owned ships, of all shapes and sizes, who went to rescue troops who were trapped on the beaches. Due to the shallow waters, British destroyers were unable to approach the beaches, and soldiers were having to wade out to the boats, many of them waiting hours in shoulder-deep water. On 27 May 1940, the small-craft section of the British Ministry of Shipping telephoned boat builders around the coast, asking them to collect all boats with "shallow draught" that could navigate the shallow waters. Attention was directed to the pleasure boats, private yachts and launches moored on the River Thames and along the south and east coasts. Some of them were taken with the owners' permission – and with the owners insisting they would sail them – while others were requisitioned by the government with no time for the owners to be contacted. The boats were checked to make sure they were seaworthy, fuelled, and taken to Ramsgate to set sail for Dunkirk. They were crewed by Royal Navy officers, ratings and experienced volunteers. Very few owners sailed their own vessels, apart from fishermen and one or two others.



When they reached France, some of the boats acted as shuttles between the beaches and the destroyers, ferrying soldiers to the warships. Others carried hundreds of soldiers each back to Ramsgate, England, protected by the Royal Air Force from the attacks of the Luftwaffe.

For many people, VE day was difficult to celebrate as

fighting was still going on in the Far East. Even Churchill said that it was OK to have a brief period of rejoicing, but that there was still a lot of work to be done.

Finally, on 15th August this year, we will commemorate VJ80 – 80 years since VJ Day (Victory over Japan Day) which marked the official end of World War II, when Japan surrendered to the Allied forces bringing an end to a war that had lasted six years and cost millions of lives and ushering in the post-war recovery phase and shaping modern geopolitics, including the rebuilding of Japan and the rise of the Cold War.



VJ Day is a day to honour the sacrifices made by the Allied forces, and to celebrate the restoration of peace. It is also a day to remember the memories of those who lost their lives during the war.

The surrender was announced on August 15, 1945, following the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and was formally signed on September 2, 1945, aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay. V-J Day is observed to honour the conclusion of the war in the Pacific and to remember the immense human cost of the conflict.

VJ Day (Victory over Japan Day) is commemorated differently across the world, reflecting the unique histories and contributions of each nation during World War II.

- United Kingdom – The UK holds national remembrance services, including a ceremony at the Cenotaph in London. The Royal British Legion organizes events to honour veterans, and communities across the country hold parades and services.
- United States – The US marks VJ Day with military ceremonies and historical reflections, particularly in Hawaii, where the formal surrender took place aboard the USS Missouri.
- Australia – Commemorations include memorial services and educational programs highlighting the role of Australian forces in the Pacific.
- India – India remembers the contributions of the Indian Army, which played a crucial role in the Burma campaign.
- Japan – Japan observes the day with reflection and remembrance, focusing on the impact of the war and promoting peace and reconciliation.

The Very Revd Jo Kelly-Moore, chair of the Association of English Cathedrals and the Dean of St Albans said:

“As we gather in prayer in our Cathedrals and places of worship on that special anniversary, the bells that ring out are also a call to us to renew our commitment, people of all faiths and none, to work for peace in our communities and in God’s world.”

Driven by Love: Action for Children Sunday 2025

How faith and compassion are shaping brighter futures for vulnerable children

A Tradition of Care and Commitment



Imagine a world where every child feels safe, supported, and loved—a world where no child goes to bed hungry, feels alone in their struggles, or lacks the opportunities to thrive. This vision is at the heart of **Action for Children Sunday**, a powerful day of reflection, prayer, and action that brings churches and communities together to stand up for the most vulnerable among us.

Every year, usually on the second Sunday of July, churches across the UK come together to celebrate **Action for Children Sunday**—a day dedicated to reflecting on the vital work of Action for Children and its deep-rooted partnership with the Methodist Church. In 2025, the theme is **"Driven by love, we take action for children,"** a powerful reminder that compassion must be more than a feeling—it must lead to action. Love is not passive; it is a force that moves us to act, to give, and to fight for justice.

For over **150 years**, Action for Children has been at the forefront of supporting vulnerable children and families, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to thrive. From providing safe homes to offering mental health support, the charity's mission is clear: **to protect and empower children, no matter their circumstances**. But the work is far from over. As challenges grow, so must our commitment to making a difference.

This year, as churches gather in worship, they will not only **pray for change**—they will **become the change**. Through donations, advocacy, and community action, we can ensure that love is more than a feeling—it is a force that shapes the future.

Faith in Action: The Church's Role

The Methodist Church has long been a champion of social justice, and its partnership with Action for Children is a testament to its commitment to caring for the most vulnerable in society. Action for Children Sunday is not just a day of worship—it is a call to action. Congregations are encouraged to reflect on the challenges facing children today, pray for those in need, and contribute to the charity's life-changing work.

Churches across the UK will hold special services, incorporating prayers, hymns, and reflections that highlight the struggles faced by children in poverty, those in care, and young people battling mental health issues. The worship outline for 2025

includes passages from scripture that emphasize **love, justice, and the responsibility to care for the most vulnerable.**

The Reality for Children in 2025

While the UK is a country of immense opportunity, many children still face significant hardships. Rising living costs, the lingering effects of the pandemic, and cuts to social services have left thousands of families struggling.

- **Child poverty** remains a pressing issue, with millions of children growing up in households where basic needs—food, clothing, and heating—are not guaranteed.
- **Mental health concerns** among young people are at an all-time high, with many unable to access the support they desperately need.
- **Children in care** often face instability, moving between homes and struggling to find a sense of belonging.

Action for Children works tirelessly to address these challenges, offering practical support, advocacy, and a voice for those who might otherwise go unheard.

How You Can Make a Difference

Action for Children Sunday is more than a day of awareness—it is an opportunity to **turn faith into action.** Here's how you can help:

Donate: Financial contributions help fund essential services, from emergency support for struggling families to long-term care for children in need. Even a small donation can make a significant impact.

Fundraise: Organize community events, sponsored walks, or bake sales to raise money for the charity's initiatives. Churches and local groups can come together to create meaningful fundraising efforts.

Advocate: Speak up for policies that protect children's rights and ensure they receive the support they need. Contact local representatives, sign petitions, and raise awareness in your community.

Volunteer: Offer your time to local projects that support children and families in crisis. Whether mentoring young people or helping at a food bank, every act of service matters.

A Future Built on Love

As churches gather on **Action for Children Sunday 2025**, the message is clear: **love is not passive—it is a force that drives change.** By coming together in faith and action, we can create a future where every child is safe, supported, and given the chance to flourish.

For more information on how to get involved, visit [Action for Children's website](#).

The History of Vanilla

Like many people, one of the musts when we go away is to have an ice cream. Standing outside the ice cream parlour you are faced with a long list of ice cream flavours, some extremely exotic, but the one that is always there, and is reputed to be the most popular choice, is vanilla. This got me to thinking about where the vanilla comes from. I've seen it in its pod form on the cooking shows on TV but didn't appreciate the effort to get it there, so decided to do some research and this is what I found out.

Madagascar currently dominates in the trade of vanilla, but it doesn't originate from there. Instead, it started in the jungles of Mexico and Central America, where a long, windy vine evolved to develop that distinctive, penetrating aroma that we all know so well.

What is perhaps most compelling about vanilla is the fact that its industry exists because of a 12-year-old enslaved boy who lived 180 years ago on a remote Indian Ocean Island. But the orchid, whose pod-shaped fruits contain the sweet vanilla essence, would take a wild journey to get there from Mexico, where the Totonac Indigenous people, who settled around 600AD on Mexico's Atlantic coast, first noticed the scent. The pods were collected by the Totonacs from the wild but they did not have an organised cultivation system. After the Aztecs conquered the Totonac civilisation in the late 1400s, they demanded it as a tribute as it was so scarce and valued.

The Totonacs had a legend about the origins of the vanilla plant. It involves a royal princess eloping with a young man. After being discovered and killed, a tree and a climbing orchid appeared in their resting place: the orchid wrapped around the trunk of the tree, resembling a woman's arms around her lover. The flowers that sprouted from the vine grew into fragrant pods, known today as vanilla beans.

The Aztecs used vanilla to flavour *xocoatl*, the drink they produced from cacao and other spices, but even then it was reserved for nobility or special occasions. It was this treasured beverage that emperor Moctezuma Xocoyotzin offered Hernán Cortés and his band of Spaniards when they arrived in his capital city of Tenochtitlan in 1519.

Once the spice got into Spain, it became highly prized, and everyone wanted it, with chefs all over the world competing to use it in their recipes. The big issue was that, like many orchids, although they could be grown all over the world and made to flower, getting them to produce pods and seeds was more difficult as they relied on a specific type of bee found only in the tropical regions of the Americas to pollinate the flowers to allow the plant to produce fruits.

Among those set on breaking the Spanish monopoly of Mexican-produced vanilla were the white French planters in the island of Bourbon, now called Réunion, in the Indian Ocean. In 1822, the colony received a



batch of vanilla plants, cuttings from the first ever vanilla plant to survive and flower in Europe. Although hopes were high, no fruit was born and the planters eventually resigned themselves to failure.

But in late 1841, planter Ferréol Bellier-Beaumont was walking in his field with a 12 year old enslaved boy called Edmond when he noticed two vanilla fruits on a vine.

How could this be? The planters had tried it all before with no success, and now this lone vine had born fruit. Edmond claimed he was responsible for it, but Bellier-Beaumont refused to believe him. However, when he saw another flower pollinated some days later Edmond showed him. Each vanilla orchid (*vanilla planifolia*) has both male and female parts, divided by a membrane to prevent self-pollination. The boy took a nearby flower and peeled the lip of the orchid with his finger, lifted the membrane with a stick and pressed the female and male parts together – a manoeuvre that was not entirely unlike the pollination of a watermelon he had been shown some time earlier.



Bellier-Beaumont was both shocked and delighted and could not keep the news to himself. Soon Edmond was touring the island, showing other planters his trick, enabling vanilla to be produced without bees! Réunion's vanilla planters fulfilled their dream: by 1848 they managed to export 50kg of vanilla pods to France, and in 1898, when they produced 200 tonnes of dried vanilla, they had overtaken Mexico as the global supplier.

Although he was freed along with all French slaves in 1848, in the coming years he was blamed for a robbery and sentenced to five years' imprisonment with hard labour in 1852. In addition, a French botanist tried to take credit for Edmond's invention, claiming he had visited Réunion in 1838 and had

showed a group of planters the technique to pollinate vanilla.

While Edmond was eventually freed and his discovery was acknowledged (thanks partly to the vigorous support of his former enslaver), he died impoverished at 51.

Despite his monumental contribution, Edmond Albius (his full name as a free man and citizen) was never properly recognized or compensated for his discovery, and he died in poverty.

Artificial vanilla was developed in the 1800s and this equates to about 99% of the market. Nowadays, only 1% of the market is served by natural vanilla and as it is still hand pollinated, it is a very expensive commodity – in 2018 its price hit a record high of £445 per kg, making it more valuable by weight than silver!

So, next time you are tucking into your vanilla ice cream, spare a thought for the 12 -year-old slave boy, Edmund Albius, who made it all possible.

Volunteers Required – Your Church Needs You!

1 Peter 4 10-11

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, managing it as a good steward of the varied grace of God. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God; if anyone serves, they should do so with all the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen"

So how can I serve I hear you cry!
Good News your church needs you!

Everyone has a skill & many hands make light work. You may think that you are only playing a small part but that might be the most integral part and the whole would not work without it.

The volunteers that we have are the beating heart of Lyndon not only on a Sunday, but also in the week and in the lead up to special occasions and key events in the Christian calendar.

So firstly, thank you to anyone who did or does anything to keep that beating heart thumping at Lyndon, your part has not gone unnoticed.

All I ask today is that you take a few minutes to see how you can help.

Sunday roles -

Meet & Greet (welcome people and hand out hymn books & items for the service & pass round the offertory)

Coffee & Tea (make refreshments for us to enjoy after the service)

Collection (count & document the plate collection)

Sound (easier that it sounds! - manage the microphones during a service)

We have always got other roles during the year for example helping with flowers, decorating the Christmas tree, helping at the Christmas Fayre, helping in Time Out, writing a magazine article. Listen out for requests for help during the Sunday morning notices, or look out for requests in the magazine.

If any of these appeal to you or you would like to know more, speak to me on a Sunday and I am happy to chat through.

Claire Frew, Senior Steward



EARLSWOOD

METHODIST CHURCH

(CORNER OF WOOD LANE & RUMBUSH LANE – B94 5JR)

70th ANNIVERSARY

FETE

SAT 5th JULY

2.00pm – 4.30pm

FREE CAR PARKING

ADMISSION £1 (Adult) Children free

MAD DOM – THE ENTERTAINER

MUSIC, VINTAGE ENGINES & CRAFTS

HOMEMADE CAKES & REFRESHMENTS

GAMES & STALLS FOR ALL.

SUPPORTING:

Hollytrees Animal Rescue Trust & Church funds

July & August Quiz

**All of the following clues to items of clothing that can be worn
e.g. Chemists = Boots**

1	Dead heat	
2	London Market	
3	A Bungee	
4	Legal counsels	
5	Chromosomes	
6	Prepare birds	
7	Spirit drinks	
8	Tooth holders	
9	A cricketer and a hat	
10	Stubborn animals	
11	Famous canal	
12	Breathes quickly	
13	Stopped by police	
14	Four in a pack	
15	Good Hope perhaps...	
16	Sports coaches	
17	Potato	
18	A cut of beef	

Answers please to Lynne Tyler or Church Email

by 15th August 2025

ICE CREAM FLAVOURS WORD SEARCH

L	C	C	V	O	N	G	N	Y	U	C	S	N	B
W	E	L	H	S	Q	C	O	S	R	H	T	I	U
R	X	M	F	O	O	F	M	N	K	E	R	S	B
W	A	Z	A	C	C	M	E	A	V	R	A	I	B
A	Z	S	O	R	B	O	L	Y	O	R	W	A	L
T	N	N	P	J	A	B	L	M	C	Y	B	R	E
G	U	A	G	B	K	C	A	A	S	H	E	M	G
T	Q	Z	N	X	E	N	D	U	T	P	R	U	U
L	Y	H	D	A	G	R	I	E	Z	E	R	R	M
Y	Y	H	G	O	B	U	R	E	T	I	Y	N	P
V	A	N	I	L	L	A	C	Y	E	L	X	L	J
Y	R	R	E	B	E	U	L	B	Q	B	A	M	T
M	I	N	T	C	H	O	C	C	H	I	P	S	L
M	A	E	R	C	S	E	I	K	O	O	C	W	K

BANANA

BLUEBERRY

BUBBLEGUM

CHERRY

CHOCOLATE

COCONUT

COOKIES CREAM

LEMON

MANGO

MINT CHOC CHIP

RASPBERRY

RUM RAISIN

SALTED CARAMEL

STRAWBERRY

VANILLA

May & June Quiz Answers

- 1) LIMA 2) GOLF 3) KILO 4) ROMEO and JULIET 5) NOVEMBER
 6) VICTOR (Meldrew) 7) TANGO 8) YANKEE 9) INDIA 10) QUEBEC
 11) CHARLIE (Chaplin) 12) ZULU 13) DELTA 14) OSCAR
 15) NATO PHONETIC ALPHABET

Last month's quiz was far too easy and everybody got it 100% right—well done everyone. Hopefully this month will strike the right balance and will be more challenging. Good luck!

Lyndon Community Page

We really would like to make this page and the whole magazine relevant, therefore, please get in touch. Let us know what you like and don't like and send or give any important events, ideas, offers, stories, feedback or tips personally to Lynne Tyler or by e-mail to lyndonmethodist@btconnect.com.

As previously mentioned, to keep this section going, improve this magazine and to try and create a closer community we really need your interaction.

AFTERNOON OUT?

NETHER WHITACRE



OPEN GARDENS 2025

SATURDAY & SUNDAY

30TH & 31ST AUGUST

11 Gardens open from 1.00pm to 5.00pm

Tickets £6.00 per person (Children free)

Available from Methodist Church, Station Road B46 2EH

Or any Open Garden

Refreshments Available

Car Parking at Village Hall & St Giles

Proceeds to Nether Whitacre Methodist Church

NO DOGS PLEASE

The Hobs Meadow Lunch Club



Join Age UK Solihull staff and volunteers for a hot meal, entertainment and wonderful company at our Hobs Meadow Lunch Club for over 65s.

Join us every Thursday
EXCEPT the first Thursday of each month

12:00 - 3:00pm

Cost: £11

Hobs Meadow Pub
Ulleries Road
Solihull
B92 8ED

Includes two-course meal, hot drinks,
entertainment raffle and bingo/quiz.



For more information and to register for this club, please contact :

 **0121 704 7811**

 **activities@ageuksolihull.org.uk**

Age UK Solihull is a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in England and Wales

Registered Charity Number: 1055887 Company Number: 3180062

The Core, Central Library Building, Homer Road, Solihull, B91 3RG



www.ageuksolihull.org.uk

Notices & Events

Ladies Club - 1.30pm to 3.30pm

Wednesday 2nd, 16th and 30th July

Wednesday 13th and 27th August

Lunch Club - Fridays 12pm to 1pm

JULY

4th Chicken Casserole

11th Braised Liver

18th CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

Price: starter £1, main £5, pudding £1

No need to book - Just come along

Unfortunately, Lunch Club will close on 11th July. Thanks to Margaret and all her team for their years of service. Please see information on page 27 for an alternative.

Ideally, we would love for this regular event to continue in some form, but for that to happen, a new team will need to be formed. If anyone would like to take the lead on this please do come and have a chat with Rev Karen, or speak to Claire Frew or Lynne Tyler.

Monthly Prayer and Bible Study - 7.00pm - 8.30pm

Wednesday 2nd July

Wednesday 6th August

Hobs Moat WI - 7pm to 9pm

Monday 21st July

Monday 18th August

Notices & Events

ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING

This year's Annual Church Meeting took place on 18th May 2025. If you would like to see a copy of the full minutes please speak to Janet Rudge.

It was raised at the meeting that it would be a good idea to sit with different people during coffee as it would give an opportunity to get to know people better.

It was also mentioned that if you are unable to attend the Prayer Group that if possible perhaps you could spend some time at home at 7.00 p.m. in prayer as was done during the Covid Pandemic.

CHURCH FLOWER COORDINATOR REQUIRED

We are still looking for somebody to take over the very important role of church flower coordinator. You don't need to be able to do flower arranging, as this is more of an admin role. Annually, you would need to prepare the rota for arrangers and donors which is usually done for the period July to February. In addition, on a weekly basis you would need to contact the donor about two weeks before the date they have chosen to ask for their donation. You would also need to co-ordinate the flower arranging process for the special festivals - Easter, Harvest, Remembrance and Christmas. Please speak to Lorraine Sibson for more information. Thank you

Lorraine Sibson

BRING AND SHARE LUNCH - 20th July 2025

As many of you will know, 20th July is Rev Karen's last service with us.

Everyone is invited to attend a bring & share lunch after the service to say goodbye to Karen, share some memories of her time with us, enjoy a time of fellowship and to wish her good luck as she moves on to the next part of her ministry.

Tea, coffee and squash will be provided.

Please spread the word, bring something to bring & share and help to make this a celebration of Karen's time with us!

Thank you.

Claire Frew

CIRCUIT WELCOME SERVICE - 31st August 2025

The Circuit Welcome Service for our new minister, Rev Joseph Ribeiro, will take place at Castle Bromwich Methodist Church, 11 Cat Lane, Birmingham B34 6SJ on Sunday 31st August 2025 at 1.00pm. All are welcome.

Services in July

Sunday 6th July

10:30am Communion Service led by Rev Caroline Homan

5.00pm Lyndon People

Sunday 13th July

10:30am Service led by Barry Davis

Sunday 20th July

10:30am Service led by Rev Karen Webber

Sunday 27th July

10:30am Own arrangement service led by Claire Frew

Services in August

Sunday 3rd August

10:30am Communion Service led by Rev Dr Israel Sevanyagam

5.00pm Lyndon People

Sunday 10th August

10:30am Service led by Oluseyi Ayeni

Sunday 17th August

10:30am Service led by Claire Frew

Sunday 24th August

10.30am Service led by Barry Davis

Sunday 31st August

10.30am Service led by Jo Hancock

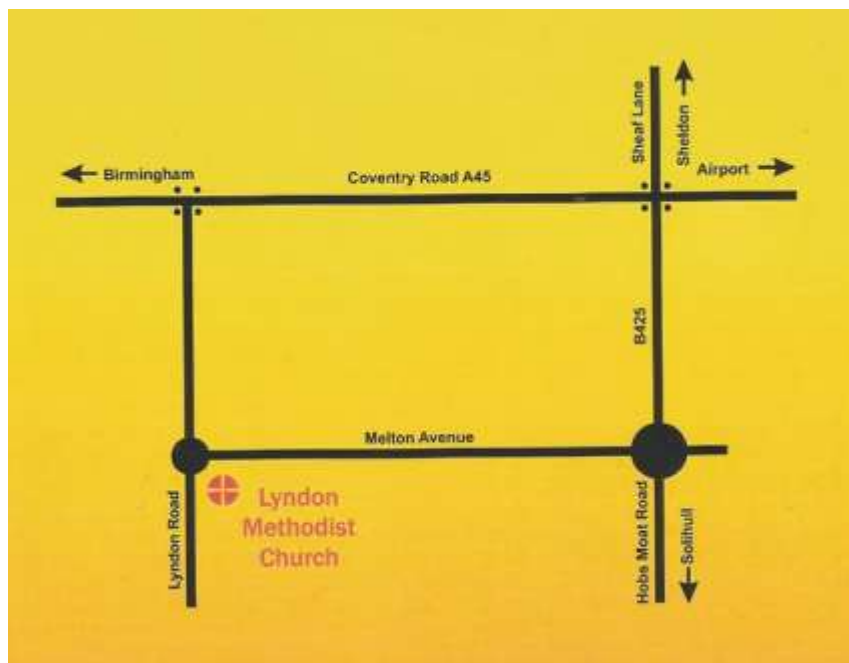
Our next issue will be September 2025

I am looking forward to receiving your contributions by

15th AUGUST 2025

by email to Lynne Tyler or to lyndonmethodist@btconnect.com

or by post to Church – address below



Lyndon Methodist Church
Melton Avenue
Solihull
West Midlands
B92 7QX

<https://lyndonmethodist.org.uk>

Charity No. 1150167