

Keeping in Touch Wesley Place Methodist Church, Alsager

Dear Friends

There's been a resurgence in singing over recent years - The Voice, X Factor, Britain's Got Talent, and the numerous Community Choirs springing up all over the place are a sign of the irrepressible need we human beings have to sing!

The Church I grew up in had a Carol Singing Party that went out every Christmas Eve until the early hours never to collect money, simply to share faith and bring joy. It was led by the Church Choir leader and was 4 part singing (Children and those who can't read music were 'allowed' to sing the tune with the sopranos!). Even my youth club leader came along, with his famous singing voice likened to that of a crow! So it was in my youth that I learned all the words and the bass and tenor parts to all the Christmas carols.

We didn't do it for money, in fact we refused money and encouraged people to support their own charity if they wanted to. It was about sharing faith and bringing joy.

Last Monday evening Wesley Place hosted and benefited from the Alsager Community Choir Christmas Concert - it was indeed a truly joyous occasion. The evidence was on every face of every person singing - they knew they enjoyed it, and so therefore did those of us who listened. (A big thank you to everyone who supported, donations of £486.42 have been given to church funds).

Someone has said recently that Music is a time machine - it can indeed transport us over decades, and centuries, and indeed take us to places where time seems to stand still. L. R. Knost, author and social justice activist said:

"Music speaks the language of the soul, penetrating into the past and resonating into the future, unearthing pain and tenderness and sorrow and joy, reminding us of our infinite fragility and extraordinary strength, reigniting our dreams and passions once again to remind us of who we are meant to be."

I can't agree more! Which is why it's interesting that whether we're singing Carols, or participating in Whamageddon, music plays such an important part in Christmas. It is the timeless festival that touches all our memories, sorrows, and joys, and brings the best tradition of the past and projects us into the new year with hope. Christians have no monopoly on this, and although we have some cracking Christmas music, we can't own all of Christmas!

Although I think we can claim to have all that meaning and more because it's Jesus Christ who is at the heart of Christmas. There are no records of him being musical very much, although the religion of his day had its music, but his whole life has been celebrated in music of every variety.

Jesus' birth was heralded by Angels singing, perhaps the best sort of singing there is! When the angel of the Lord appeared to the Shepherd's in Luke chapter 2, they were accompanied by the glory of the Lord shining, and soon a whole company of angels gathered and sang 'Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those on whom God's favour rests'.

What a sound!

But what emotion will have been expressed in that sound, and what emotion will have that sound unlocked?!

And will time have appeared to have stood still I wonder? Angelic singing from before time began echoing round the universal spheres, and echoed in every lullaby, every cry of woe and grief, every song of longing for peace, and every folk song and community choir that expresses the depths of the human soul, let our voices join with the angels.

So - whether it's singing along to the favourites on the radio, or joining in the carol Service this Sunday evening at 5pm, I hope you can sing from your boots this Christmas.

Sing Glory to God, sing of the passion and depth of your soul, sing loud, sing soft, sing in tune, sing with meaning, put into song the joy of knowing Jesus has come, Jesus is here, Jesus was born for us 'on earth below' and 'in heaven above'.

Happy Christmas!

PS Don't forget that there is no service at Wesley Place on 29th December, we will join friends at St Mary's Church.

Our first service of the New Year will be on January 5th and will be our Covenant service. An almost uniquely Methodist service reminding ourselves of God's promises to us and ours to Him. We shall launch into the new year thinking out our calling as a Church to be a bridge of faith and hope into our community.

God bless

Rob

MONDAY GAMES AND WEDNESDAY MORNINGS@WESLEYPLACE

Please note that after our break for Christmas and the New Year we will meet again on Monday 6th January 2pm-4pm

Wednesday 8th January when there will be an informal service of Holy Communion led by the Rev'd Neal Street at 11.30am. Open as usual 11am-1pm

Open House

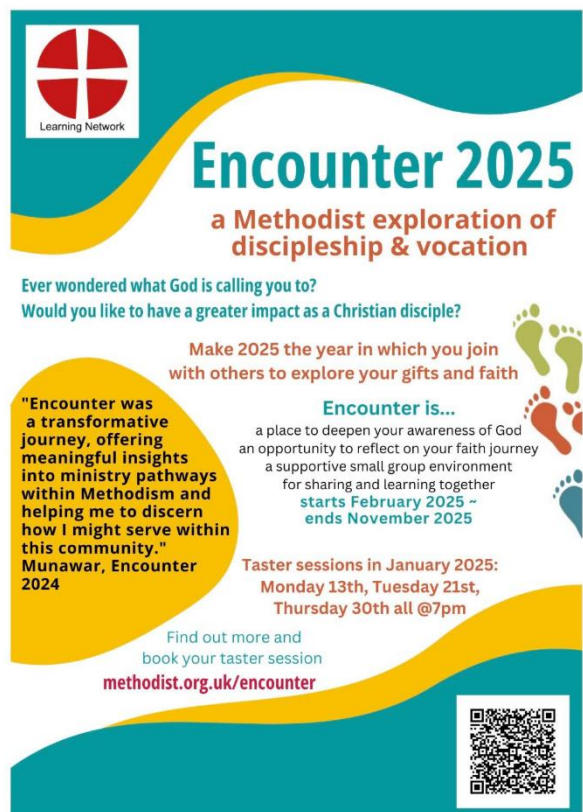
Boxing Day and New years Day at Gordon & Bronwen's 10-30 till 1pm
Hot Chocolate, Coffee, Tea etc.
Donations to Wesley place
All welcome

Invitation from Rev'd Sarah Butcher:

Taize Service rehearsal/planning: Are you a musician/singer? Interested in joining our Taizé service (9th Feb, 3pm Nantwich)? Come along to a rehearsal/planning meeting on Tuesday 7th January at 7:30pm at Shavington Methodist Church. Parking is available at Shavington Primary School opposite or speak to your local minister to see if there are spaces for a lift there.

You can just turn up, but if possible please let Sarah Butcher know you are coming, with what instrument you will be playing or if you are singing. This is to help with preparing sheet music. (Contact Sarah on 01270666156 or sarah.butcher@methodist.org.uk).

If you look at this and think, "what is a Taizé Service?", it is a style of worship that is simple and meditative. The style of music is fairly gentle and repetitive, with beautiful harmonies.



The poster features a teal and yellow wavy background. At the top left is the Learning Network logo, a red cross inside a white circle. The main title 'Encounter 2025' is in large teal letters, with the subtitle 'a Methodist exploration of discipleship & vocation' in orange. Below this, it asks 'Ever wondered what God is calling you to?' and 'Would you like to have a greater impact as a Christian disciple?'. It encourages making 2025 the year to join with others to explore gifts and faith. A quote from Munawar (Encounter 2024) describes it as a transformative journey. It lists 'Encounter is...' as a place to deepen awareness of God, reflect on faith, and share in a supportive group environment, starting in February 2025 and ending in November 2025. Taster sessions are listed for January 2025: Monday 13th, Tuesday 21st, and Thursday 30th, all at 7pm. A QR code is in the bottom right corner.

Encounter 2025
a Methodist exploration of discipleship & vocation

Ever wondered what God is calling you to?
Would you like to have a greater impact as a Christian disciple?

Make 2025 the year in which you join with others to explore your gifts and faith

"Encounter was a transformative journey, offering meaningful insights into ministry pathways within Methodism and helping me to discern how I might serve within this community."
Munawar, Encounter 2024

Encounter is...
a place to deepen your awareness of God
an opportunity to reflect on your faith journey
a supportive small group environment
for sharing and learning together
starts February 2025 ~ ends November 2025

Taster sessions in January 2025:
Monday 13th, Tuesday 21st,
Thursday 30th all @7pm

Find out more and book your taster session
methodist.org.uk/encounter

