



SOUTHPORT METHODIST CIRCUIT

Circuit News

January 2026



Rev. Christopher Humble
Circuit Superintendent

I wish you all a very happy new year. Technically it is still the season of Christmas as I write these words, because the feast lasts for twelve days until 5th January, then we celebrate the Epiphany of our Lord as we remember the visit of the wise men and the mysterious gifts which they presented to the Christ child. The lectionary invites us in coming weeks to also consider the significance of other manifestations of the true nature of Christ through his first sign or miracle at the wedding in Cana and his baptism in the River Jordan and his call to discipleship. These events are linked by that word manifest "our God is manifest below" as Charles Wesley puts it repeatedly in his hymn on the Incarnation "Let earth and heaven combine" (StF 208). Such manifestations are epiphanies, revelations of Christ's true identity, testifying to the truth that he has come as Saviour of all the whole world. As such they invite us to reflect on our discipleship and mission as God's people in the world.

This month sees us awaiting the work of the second round of the Stationing Matching Group in the middle of the month for our appointment within the circuit after Patrick Evans sits down in the Summer. Please continue to pray for discernment for all involved in the process, the ministers in the process, our Circuit Invitation Committee comprising Circuit presbyters and Circuit Stewards and representatives from the churches most directly involved.

All our churches will be holding the annual Covenant Service in coming weeks. The Covenant Service was a means of grace begun by John Wesley for his societies, and now often used as a way to mark the new year, viewing such as an invitation to re-dedicate ourselves to God and the work which God calls us to, for the sake of the kingdom. The words we are asked to say in the Covenant Service are challenging and demanding. They remind us that discipleship is not easy and not always about what we would like.

So, as we head into a new year of unknowns, we grasp the hand that always holds us, the hand of the God who always leads us, loves us, feeds us and equips us. May our faith sustain us and may God bless us as we travel onwards.

With every good wish,

Christopher

We remember with thanksgiving the life of Audrey Barnard of Formby who died on 23 November, and pray for The Revd Geoffrey and the wider family in their loss.



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.

From Connection to Compassion: Sally's Journey



Sally Eyes
Circuit Mission Enabler

What began as a local outreach project in Ainsdale and Liverpool Road has grown into a circuit-wide mission led by the dedicated Sally Eyes. Though she is officially contracted for 16 hours a week, Sally's passion often sees her going far beyond those hours to support our community.

Sally's path to the church wasn't a traditional one. Aside from a brief time as a Brownie, she had no church connection until her 20s. While struggling with postnatal challenges, a neighbor—a member of the Methodist church—invited her to a ladies' group. "It wasn't about the services at first," Sally recalls. "It was just a way to come out of my shell." That initial invitation led to a life-changing connection. Three years later, at age 31, Sally was baptized. Her new-found faith sparked an enthusiasm to see a need and respond to it, eventually leading her to partner with the charity Compassion Acts.

Sally's work is underpinned by prayer and a deep belief in the power of relationship has impact across the Circuit. Her diverse roles include:

Food Pantries: Providing essential groceries and a friendly face to families in Southport.

Youth & Schools: Working with the Schools Worker Trust, Green Bank High School's "Safe Space," and "Sweaty Church."

Sunday at Six: A youth group providing a safe environment to share faith, with the annual highlight of attending the 3Generate Methodist youth conference.

Early Years & Support: Leading playgroups (including her work at St Peter's, Birkdale) and supporting

bereavement groups.

Join the Team: Use Your Skills

To increase our capacity to help, we are looking for more volunteers to join Sally in our food pantries, toddler groups, and bereavement support.

Sally has found that many volunteers start by using a specific skill from their professional lives—whether that is managing money, organizing logistics, or working with people. "Once their confidence builds and they see the areas of need," Sally says, "they often branch out into new and rewarding areas they never expected."

Get Involved

If you feel called to use your skills, be it for an hour or a morning we would love to hear from you. Help us turn "connection" into "compassion."

Contact Sally Eyes or the Circuit Office to find out how you can help. sally.eyes@southportmethodist.org.uk

Warm Welcome @ PPW
1st Tuesday of the month: 10-11.45am

Warm
Welcoming
Free
Safe

Coffee, tea, biscuits, activities
Short input from different community speakers

PPW
St Philip & St Paul with Wesley
Corner of Scarisbrick New Rd/Hampton Rd PR8 6QF

I am no longer my own but yours. Your will, not mine, be done in all things.
Covenant Prayer

NORTH WEST ENGLAND METHODIST DISTRICT

District Online Worship

District Covenant Service
(with Communion)

with Revd Phil Gough,
District Secretary for Ministry and
Vocations preaching.

Sunday 11th January at 6.30pm

District Online Worship is held on the second Sunday of every month. For the Zoom code (which remains the same), please email prayer@nwmethodists.org.uk or direct message us on Facebook

Preventing Isolation and Supporting Healthy Ageing in Our Community



Helen Stanbury ALL General Manager

For many, the phrase “luncheon club” conjures images of a quiet room and a hot plate of food. But step into Ainsdale Lunch and Leisure (ALL) on any weekday, and you’ll find something far more dynamic. This isn’t just a place to eat; it’s a proactive “healthy ageing hub” designed to keep the local community connected, capable, and vibrant.

General Manager Helen Stanbury talks about how a community initiative founded in 1982 has evolved into a sophisticated preventative service for older adults.

A ‘Passion for Purpose’ Helen Stanbury’s path to ALL wasn’t linear. With a background in retail management, marketing, and 15 years leading a Sefton animal rescue centre, she transitioned to adult social care with a clear mission: restoring self-worth. “Older adults shouldn’t lose sight of their self-worth,” Helen says. “They deserve to be active contributors, not defined by what they can no longer do.”

This philosophy has shifted the charity’s focus from reacting to crisis to preventing it. By the time someone reaches a “crisis point,” it’s often too late to maintain their independence. Helen’s goal is to intervene much earlier.

The ALL Story began as “The Care Scheme” under Reverend David Halstead and the Ainsdale Methodist Church has grown significantly. While it became an independent charity in 2009, its bond with the church remains its bedrock—51% of its Trustees are still nominated or approved by the Church Council or Southport Circuit.

Today, that Methodist heritage of compassionate service translates into impressive numbers. Last year alone, the team served 5,771 on-site lunches and delivered 1,824 meals.

ALL is a Holistic Toolkit for Health “People do not flourish through meals alone,” Helen explains. “They need a combination of nutrition, social connection, and purposeful activity.”

To meet these needs, ALL has built a diverse ecosystem of support:



Christmas at ALL

Physical & Cognitive Vitality: Tailored exercise classes alongside craft and art sessions to keep bodies and minds sharp.

Social Connection: A welcoming community café and peer support groups that break the cycle of isolation.

The “Early Warning” System: Because staff and volunteers know their members so well, they can spot subtle changes in health or mood early, responding with kindness before a small issue becomes a major problem.

Challenging the Stigma of Help

One of the biggest hurdles in elder care is the “crisis threshold”—the idea that you only seek help when things go wrong. Helen is working to dismantle that.

“Many people we meet aren’t looking for ‘crisis help.’ They’re looking for purpose,” she notes. With no

stigma and no complex thresholds for entry, ALL serves over 400 individuals a year across Ainsdale and Woodvale through social prescribing, self-referrals, or simply dropping into the café.

Looking Ahead: The Sustainability Challenge
While ALL has secured core funding into early 2027, the rising cost of living means the conversation around sustainability is constant.

“People often assume we run on goodwill alone,” says Helen. “Goodwill is the heartbeat, but stable funding is the oxygen. It’s what allows us to grow and support people consistently.”

The future vision is clear: Preventative, Connected, and Empowering. Helen aims to expand cognitive fitness programmes and reach even more isolated individuals in Woodvale, ensuring that “living longer” also means “living better.”

Get Involved: Be the Heartbeat of ALL
Whether you have a few hours to spare or a specific skill to share, ALL is always looking for:

Volunteers: Kitchen helpers, drivers, befrienders, and trustees.

Patrons: Simply visiting the café or spreading the word makes a difference.

Ainsdale Leisure and Lunch is situated within the Ainsdale Methodist Church buildings on Liverpool Road PR8 3NQ.

Telephone 01704 574838



Sunday@6 band
Developing musical excellence in worship
Grow your gifts in a fun environment with other young people (Year 6+)
3rd Saturday of each month
5-7pm @ PPW
To find out more: E:admin@southportmethodist.org.uk

Circuit News is produced and distributed by Southport Methodist Circuit. Copy date for the January issue is **Friday 24th February** or publication on Sunday 1st February 2026. Contributions to: admin@southportmethodist.org.uk

The Southport Annual Interfaith Lecture 2026

**‘From Encounter to Peace Building:
A pathway from Nostra Aetate to Fratelli Tutti to Pope Leo XIV’**

**3pm, Sunday, 15th February 2025
at Holy Family Church,
1 Brompton Rd, Southport PR8 6AS.**

Free Admission. No booking required.
You are invited to attend and participate in the question session that follows and light refreshments to continue socialising.

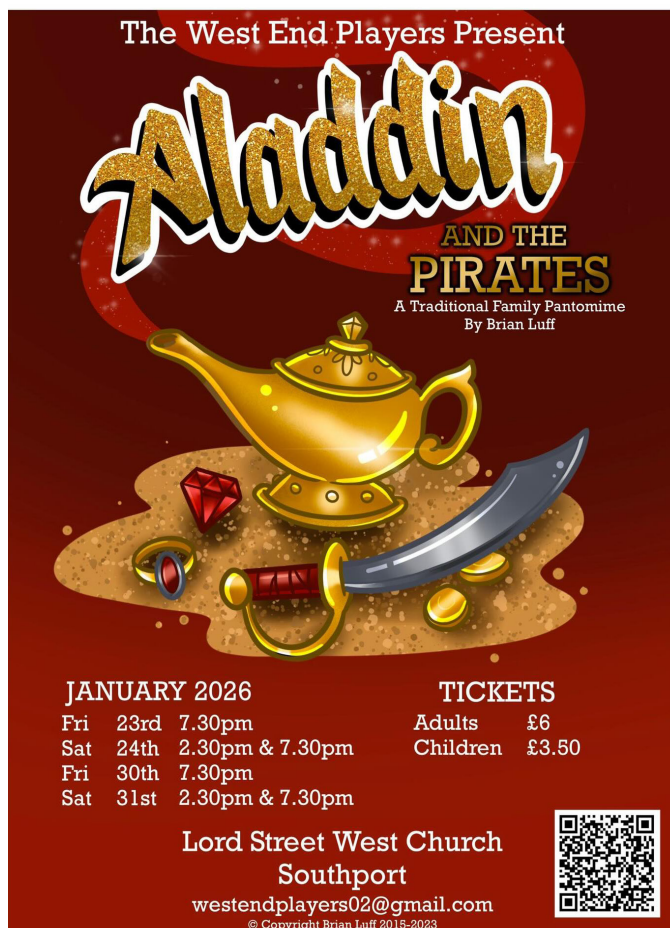
**We are honoured to have The Most Reverend
John Sherrington, Archbishop of Liverpool,
as this year’s lecturer.**



Archbishop John Sherrington, is a former lecturer in moral theology, having taught at two seminaries. In April 2025, Pope Francis appointed him as the next Metropolitan Archbishop of Liverpool; he commenced in this role May 2025. Previously holding the office of President of the Diocesan Commission for Marriage and Family Life, he has been a Consultor of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales on issues of morality, and has experience as a working parish priest.

The lecture is for 40 minutes followed by 20 minutes in which you are invited to put forward your own thoughts as to how we can support our friends of different faiths in Southport, helping us to build a more cohesive society. The lecture is open to all those that wish to support Southport faiths, irrespective of beliefs.

Car parking on site
FREE of CHARGE



The West End Players Present
Aladdin
AND THE PIRATES
A Traditional Family Pantomime
By Brian Luff

JANUARY 2026			TICKETS	
Fri	23rd	7.30pm	Adults	£6
Sat	24th	2.30pm & 7.30pm	Children	£3.50
Fri	30th	7.30pm		
Sat	31st	2.30pm & 7.30pm		

**Lord Street West Church
Southport**
westendplayers02@gmail.com
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