

Dear Friends,

Christmas might seem a long time ago to many. Most of you will have taken down your decorations, but I note some places keep a little on show until Candlemas on 2 Feb. For example, Cornerstone has a Christmas wreath donated by Ukrainian Christians, who of course keep Christmas in the Orthodox tradition on 7 January. Christians of the Anglican and Roman Catholic tradition keep Epiphany as a season right up to Candlemas on 2nd Feb, and some churches will still have the crib on show with the wise men offering their gifts. The Presentation or Candlemas, so called because it was known as the Mass of Candles in ancient times when the events of forty days after the birth of Jesus were remembered, of how Mary and Joseph went to the Temple to present their son to the Lord. Known by various titles the Presentation, the Purification of Mary and Candlemas the gospel account of the events centre around Simeon and Anna encountered the Christ child. Simeon declared the Christ-child as a "light for the nations" (Luke 2. 22-40). These words of Simeon form the basis of the canticle Nunc Dimittis. At Candlemass Candles were blessed in ancient times as a reminder that Christ the light of the world was with us in our ordinary, everyday lives, shining as light in the darkness. The themes of how manifest Christ is to all the world are important themes about the mission of the Church. We are called to shine with his light.

There is good news in the Circuit. Recently the Circuit made two appointments, namely a Youth Worker and a Children's & Families worker to work across the Circuit. We hope the successful candidates will be in post shortly, subject to satisfactory references and DBS checks etc. (I won't release their names until everything is in hand). We also hope to agree a role description for the Circuit Administrator/ Manager and put that out as and advert as we seek to move forward as a Circuit.

Talking of Circuit I am invited to remind you that we have a number of Circuit Services in different forms. We have a Circuit Service of Holy Communion every third Sunday of the month at 9am at PPW. The Second Sunday evening of the month is a Circuit Service at Liverpool Road at 6.30pm and these are valued by those who regularly attend them, but there is always room for others to join. All services across the circuit are open for anyone to



Rev. Christopher Humble
Circuit Superintendent

attend, of course, you are not restricted to attending the one where your membership is held!

Our Circuit morning service this quarter is on 22 Feb at Ainsdale and Ernie Grimshaw will be heading up that service as I will be on holiday. We had expected being in Scotland but my father in law's death on 30 Dec has altered our plans. Thankyou to all who have sent sympathy cards and greetings, flowers for Judith (primarily), these are greatly appreciated. We still have the task of clearing her father's house of items. Thanks to those who stepped in to take various services whilst I needed to be away. I am most grateful to other members of the Circuit team who step up when need arises.

In the latest round of Stationing Matching we were not successful in obtaining a match. The process is not over yet, but it looks increasingly less likely that we might have a replacement for Patrick when he sits down in the Summer. We need to get working on a Plan B for how the Circuit would function if I was the only full-time presbyter with the continuing part time roles of Ernie Grimshaw, Sheila Prest & Rachel Bray together with supernumeraries. Thoughts will then soon move to planning for 2027 in terms of stationing!

So, February is here, as we journey into the second month of a new year. Ash Wednesday falls on 18 February which marks the start of Lent. There will be a Circuit Service in the evening at PPW at 7.30pm. All will be very Welcome. So, I wonder how you might be planning on keeping the days of Lent? Have you a pattern for prayer, reflection and Bible study or joining a group to talk about faith?

I wish you a thoughtful Lent as we share again in that journey our Lord took of wrestling with the big questions of existence.

With prayerful good wishes,
Christopher Humble

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.

Beyond the Digital Noise: The Mission of Southport and Area Schools Worker Trust.

An interview with David ‘Tabz’ Taberner

by Martin Maynard

In the modern landscape of education, students are navigating far more than just exams, extracurriculars, and the social hierarchies of the playground. They are the first generation to grow up in a digital age defined by TikTok, Instagram, and the relentless, 24-hour pace of social media. While these platforms offer the illusion of connection, they often fail to answer the deeper, more pressing questions that young people are asking in the quiet moments of their lives.

In Southport, a dedicated group is stepping into that gap. The Southport and Area Schools Worker Trust (SSWT) isn't just an organisation; it is a presence, a listening ear, and a bridge between the digital noise and a grounded, purposeful reality.

Though the term “worker” can be broad, the role of a schools worker is highly specific. It is youth work situated directly within the educational environment, but it operates differently than traditional teaching. Much like a social worker or a specialised pastoral lead, these workers act as a vital link between a student's academic life and their personal well-being.

“A lot of young people are waking up to the fact that ‘doom scrolling’ doesn't answer the big questions,” explains the Trust's lead worker. “They are searching for deeper meaning and purpose. Our role is to create a safe space where they can ask those questions and journey through the challenges of life, finding that faith actually has a part to play in that story.”

This isn't about forced indoctrination; it's about availability. In an era where teenagers are bombarded with curated lifestyles, the Trust offers something rare: authenticity. By being present on the “front lines”—the school hallways and lunchrooms—they provide a human counterpoint to the algorithmic pressures of the modern world.

The Trust's presence in schools is defined by a commitment to pastoral care rather than traditional classroom lecturing. One of their most effective and recognisable tools is a simple “traffic light” system used during lunchtime wellbeing check-ins.

The system is brilliantly straightforward:

- **Green:** Feeling good and ready for the day.
- **Amber:** Doing okay, but perhaps facing some hurdles or feeling “flat.”
- **Red:** Struggling and in need of immediate support or a listening ear.

This system allows workers to gauge the emotional temperature of the student body at a glance. It opens the door for the most vital follow-up question in youth work: “What's behind that colour today?” By working in close partnership with schools, the Trust can relay important feedback to staff and signpost students to professional services when necessary.



It is a collaborative effort that ensures no student's struggle goes unnoticed.

Listening Over Lecturing

While the Trust is an unabapologetically Christian organisation, its approach is radically inclusive. Whether a student is of a different faith, exploring their spirituality, or claims no faith at all, the door is always open.

“It's a big shift from the old model of a Christian guest speaker coming into an RE lesson to be quizzed on theological depth,” the worker notes. “It's more about us asking them what they think about mental health, family, and friendships. We demonstrate the love of God through how we relate to them pastorally, sharing our lives and experiences rather than just quoting text.”

This “relational” ministry is the heartbeat of the Trust. It recognizes that for a teenager in 2026, a lived example of hope is far more compelling than a dry lecture on doctrine. By being themselves as Christians in these conversations, the workers offer a glimpse of a future that contains hope and purpose.

A Personal Journey From Engineering to the Heart

The passion driving the Trust often comes from a place of personal transformation. Tabz' own story is a testament to the “missing piece” many young people feel today. “I grew up in the church, following the Methodist traditions at Liverpool Road. However, as I entered my teens, those traditions began to feel stale; I felt like something vital was missing. Everything changed at 15 when I realised that faith isn't just a set of beliefs, it's a relationship.”

There was no stadium-sized event or emotional “altar call.” Instead, it was a quiet realisation in a bedroom, sparked by a small book that explained the Gospel

in simple terms. “Suddenly, I felt a profound sense of purpose,” he recalls.

A year later, after joining a youth club at Leyland Road, a leader prayed for him to be filled with the Holy Spirit. That experience made the presence of God tangible, providing a sense of comfort and guidance that would shape his entire career path.

Despite this spiritual awakening, Tabz stuck to his original plan and went to university to study Engineering. He graduated with a Master’s degree, but he soon found that while he enjoyed the mechanics of engineering, his heart was with the mechanics of the human soul. He began volunteering in youth work and realised he wanted to help young people discover the purpose he had missed during his own childhood.

“I took a leap of faith into youth ministry. I knew I didn’t just want to stay within church walls; I wanted to reach the young people out in the ‘real world’ of our schools. That was 12 years ago, and I haven’t looked back since.”

A Collaborative Team with a Shared Vision

The impact of the Trust is made possible by a diverse and growing team of staff and volunteers who bridge the gap between local churches and the school gates. The organisation functions as a town-wide, multi-denominational effort:

- **Core Staff:** A full-time schools worker is the face of the operation, supported by Phoebe, the Trust’s part-time administrator.
- **Church Partnerships:** The team utilises “dual-role” workers like Simon, who splits his time between the Trust and Canning Road Church in Hyde Park, and Amelia, who serves both the Trust and Christ Church in the town centre.
- **The Volunteer Network:** For larger projects, such as primary school “Experience” shows, the Trust mobilises up to 25 volunteers. In high schools, teams of four or five dedicated volunteers provide a vital “listening ear” during the busy lunchtime periods.
- **Governance:** The Board of Trustees brings professional expertise from education, ministry, psychology, and medicine, ensuring the Trust operates with the highest standards of safety and professional rigour.

Expanding the Walls: The Five-Year Vision

Looking ahead, the Trust’s strategy is rooted in a powerful Old Testament image: “Expanding the walls of our tent.” This concept reflects a shift in modern ministry. It is no longer enough to wait for young people to walk through the doors of a church; the “tent” must be extended into the heart of the community.

“Our vision is to reach as many young people as possible, meeting them exactly where they are,” the lead worker explains. “To do that, we need to broaden our base of support.” To turn this vision into reality, the Trust has identified three essential pillars:

1. Prayer: Considered the “engine room” of the organisation. Everything the Trust does is backed by bi-monthly meetings and a weekly digital prayer chain.

2. People: There is a constant need for volunteers who can bring diverse gifts—from pastoral listening to event management.

3. Funding: Making a professional impact requires significant resources. To sustain operations and expand the staff team over the next five years, the Trust projected an annual requirement of £127,000. Due to inflation, this need is only growing.

“It is a big job to resource this work,” Tabz admits, “but we believe the young people in this town are worth the investment. We aren’t just providing a service; we’re building a future with them.”

As the Trust enters its 26th year, the overarching sentiment is one of deep gratitude. The relationship between the Trust and Southport’s schools is built on decades of mutual respect and a shared desire to see young people thrive.

“I want to give a huge thank you to those who already know us, support us, and share our heart for the young people of this town,” says Tabz, the lead worker. “We feel incredibly blessed to have these opportunities as a Christian organisation, and we don’t take that lightly.”

The Trust remains diligent in maintaining a high level of professionalism, recognising the “real honour” it is to walk alongside staff and students alike. In an increasingly noisy world, the Southport Schools Worker Trust remains a steady, hopeful presence reminding the next generation that their value isn’t found in a “like” or a “follow,” but in their inherent worth and the relationships that grounds them!



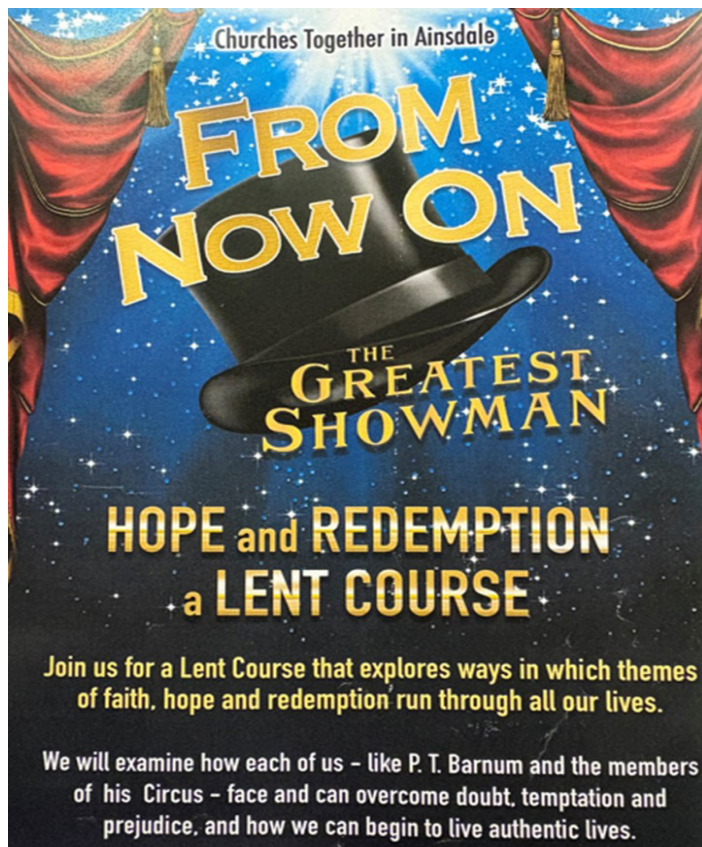
SASWtrust

FIND OUT MORE



www.saswtrust.com





The course is being run weekly on the following dates and venues at 2.00pm. You can join any or all of the sessions. No need to book, just turn up... it's free!

Week 1

2.00 pm: film screening of *"The Greatest Showman"*
Thursday 19 February at St John's Anglican church

Week 2

2.00 pm: "A Million Dreams"
Wednesday 25 February at Ainsdale Village Church

Week 3

2.00 pm: "Come Alive"
Wednesday 4 March at Ainsdale Methodist Church

Week 4

2.00 pm: "Rewrite the Stars"
Tuesday 10 March at St. John's Stone Catholic Church

Week 5

2.00 pm "Never Enough"
Tuesday 17 March at St John's Anglican Church

Week 6

2.00 pm: "From Now On"
Wednesday 25 March at Ainsdale Methodist Church



There is also a Lent Group being run every Friday at 10.30 am beginning 20 th February in the church at Formby Methodist Church

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THE BRIDGE
Parish Nursing Service
SOUTHPORT

Building Bridges
Building Resilient Inclusive Diverse Growing Environments with families affected by neurodiverse conditions
Walking Together

Together... We Can!

GIVE ONE OF OUR NURSES A CALL: Debs 07587848494
Kathryn 07345179328

ARRANGE TO SEE US @ **Leyland Road Methodist Church**

SEND AN EMAIL FOR MORE INFORMATION parish.nurse@southportmethodist.org.uk

Parish Nurse

We are thrilled to announce that the Parish Nursing Service is now live!

There have been challenges in getting to this place, but we are now able to take referrals and see clients. We have two specialist NMC registered nurses who are contracted to work 9 hours each per week and are based at the Parish Nurse Office at Leyland Road Methodist Church.

This service aims to support families affected by their children's neurodiversity and we hope to be a bridge between home, school and community. The Bridge Parish Nursing Service aims to build resilient and inclusive relationships, recognising diversity and supporting growth within families' individual and collective collaborative environments.

As we are only a small service at this time we are only able to accept referrals from clients with postcodes in PR8 and PR9 with a Southport GP, or families that attend church within the Southport Methodist Circuit.

Please contact us if you would like to see a nurse at the Parish Nurse Office or would prefer us to visit you in an environment you feel comfortable in.

Debs: 07587848494 Kathryn: 07345179328

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support and encouragement so far!

Sue, Kathryn and Debs