

SINGING THE FAITH..... 345

**"And can it be that I should gain an interest in the Saviour's blood?
Died he for me who caused his pain? For me who him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be that thou, my God, shouldst die for me?"**

Charles Wesley wrote this in May 1738, about the same time as 'Where shall my wandering soul begin?' which is often named the "Wesley's Conversion Hymn". Every year around 24th May we are reminded of John Wesley's conversion experience at a meeting in Aldersgate Street when his heart was 'strangely warmed' and he came to 'trust in Christ alone for salvation'. But we sometimes forget that Charles, a younger brother, had had a similar life-changing experience a few days earlier.

Both brothers had been active, ordained priests for some years before this; what had been an intellectual knowledge became a deeply personal experience. Their emotional exuberance caused strains in many Anglican settings where dignity and decorum were more valued.

This hymn, like most of Charles' poetry, is full of Bible references. For instance, in verse 1 "an interest in the Saviour's blood" comes from the record of the last supper and we remember this every time we take communion. In verse 2 the idea of the first-born seraph trying to comprehend divine love may sound strange to us, but it refers to 1 Peter 1:12 "things which even the angels would like to understand". In verse 3 "He left his father's throne above - - emptied himself of all but love" comes straight from Philipians 2:6-8.

As well as being rooted in scripture there is also a hint of the social involvement of the Wesley brothers. The picture in verse 4 of a prison scene (as Acts 12:7-9) demonstrates Charles' familiarity with 18th century prisons. The brothers, educated and privileged, visited prisons and cared for the under-privileged generally, as seen in their strong opposition to slavery. This concern for social justice eventually led to the rise of Trade Union movement.

Both brothers remained Anglican priests all their lives. Charles was even more opposed than John to allowing the Methodist movement to separate from the established church and was appalled when John ordained three priests for America in 1784, after the War of Independence.

The hymn is always sung to the tune Sagina but this tradition only dates from 1922. It was first published by Thomas Campbell in 1825 in a book called The Bouquet where each of the twenty three tunes were named after a plant. Sagina is a small moss-like plant of the carnation family. **RD**



**Church Stretton
Methodist Church**
In the Shropshire & Marches Circuit

A warm welcome
to you all in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
If you are visitors we trust that your holiday will bring
you joy and refreshment of spirit. Please join us for
coffee & fellowship in the hall following this service.

All are welcome

This Week at Church

 **SUNDAY SERVICES**

<u>11th OCTOBER 2026</u>	<u>18th OCTOBER 2026</u>
Rev S MacNeill Cooper	Neville Stephens
SERVICES COMMENCE AT 10.30 am	

WEDNESDAY 14th OCTOBER 2026

10 am to 12.00 Baby & Toddler Group – in church hall
2.30 pm – 4.00 pm "Cuppa & Chat" – in church hall

MINISTER
REV'D GEORGE HEINZ
Telephone: 07538480626

CHURCH WEBSITE
[www.churchstretton-
methodistchurch.org.uk](http://www.churchstretton-methodistchurch.org.uk)

**WE ARE ASKED TO PRAY
FOR THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE**

Rev George & Beth H, Sue & Rob H, Trish H,
Stella & David J, Kathryn L, Hilary & Paul L,
Those who come to our "Cuppa & Chat" Group
Christine & Gerry R.

PASTORAL VISITORS MEETING

The next meeting for Pastoral Visitors will be held on Wednesday, 21st October at 2pm in the Vestry.

Sally W (Pastoral Co-ordinator).

CHRISTMAS SHOEBOXES FOR UKRAINE

Can you help fill two shoeboxes from our church please?

One for a boy aged 6 - 8 years and one for a girl aged 6 - 8 years.

Suggestions for contents: socks, children's jewellery, hair accessories, soft toys, dolls, puzzles, card games, bubbles, stickers, coloured pencils, colouring pads, sweets etc. All items to be new please. No guns or sharp objects.

Please place your contributions into the box marked 'For Ukraine' by Sunday November 1st.

If we receive more items than can fill two boxes then we will fill more!!

Please speak to Sue if there are any queries. Thank you.

BRITISH RED CROSS - Volunteering Appeal

Our Church Stretton Shop is desperately in need of volunteers in all areas. If you are able to offer even a little time, please look at the notice on the noticeboard in the hall or outside for details. Please take a flyer from the hall noticeboard if you know someone who might be interested.

Thank you.

"ENGAGING ISSUES" 2026-27

These annual series of talks begin again on Tuesday 20th October 7.30 pm at the usual venue United Reformed Church, High Street, Church Stretton. This first talk is entitled "Sustainable Tourism – treading lightly on the earth".

The speaker is Nigel McDonald who is the lead for sustainable and regenerative tourism in the Shropshire Hills National Landscape team.

DAVID AND STELLA

We went to see David and Stella recently. They wanted to know all the news from our church and how we all are. I don't think anyone was not mentioned by name! They send their love. They celebrate their platinum (70th) wedding anniversary on 6th October. A card was sent from the church members. They will celebrate the day with just the two of them having a special tea at a nearby "posh" hotel and then on Saturday 10th they are having a party for about 60 people. They have asked us to remember them as they celebrate - give thanks for the love they have shared and their family. **Ann and Jon.**

**Items for the Church Notices for 18th October 2026 to
cdgtorridon@aol.com or 01694 328319. Thank you**

'Be still for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One, is here.'

When this tune is played before our preacher of the day leads us in worship, please take this time to be still and quiet and reflect. Thank you. It could be a time to turn in "Singing the Faith" to number 20 or to ponder the three aspects mentioned in the hymn - the presence of the Lord, the glory of the Lord and the power of the Lord.