

ashwoodnews

May June 2026



Awaken

Book before 2nd
June for a good price

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Refresh

Book now for an
amazing youth
weekend

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Summer gardening and cleaning days

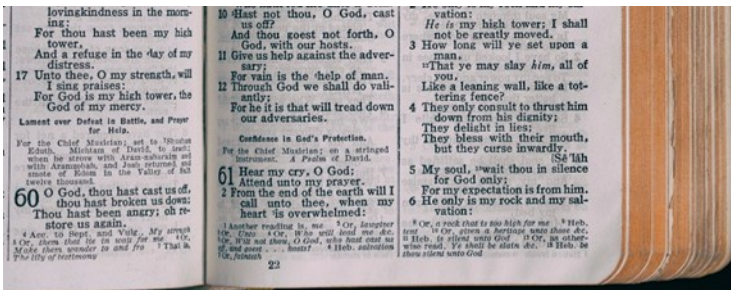
Can you help?

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ashwood
church

Helping people find
and follow Jesus



Matt's message

ASHWOOD NEWS – May/June 2026

Hello Ashwood News Readers! Welcome to our May/June Issue of our Ashwood News! We will look back over the last couple of months as well as look ahead to things coming up in the life of the church. If you're new to us, we hope you can find what you're looking for. Feel free to contact us, if we can help you further. Thanks for reading!

Hello! Welcome to our "Spring" Ashwood News. Since our last Ashwood News, the clocks have "sprung" forward, the cherry blossom has blossomed and we have celebrated Good Friday and Resurrection Sunday! Looking back in my diary, I see that I've also enjoyed: Fish and Chips at the seaside, a trip to London with friends to see "Shadowlands" (a play about CS Lewis life with the brilliant Hugh Bonneville) a quick trip to Holland with my other work and our Annual Ground Level Leaders Conference! I didn't think much had happened, but apparently there was more than I first remembered! :-)

In our Sunday meetings we've been busy too! We've explored the importance of what it means for us to be firmly "PLANTED". Like any tree or plant, without the right environment we won't continue to remain healthy or grow. If we aren't planted in the right location we won't grow either. We looked at being planted in God's

Presence, Planted in God's people, Planted for purpose and Planted for the long haul. We're now considering how we ensure that not only are we planted, but also that we are



ROOTED. Ensuring that our roots go down deep enough to enable us to continue to remain healthy and to grow as followers of Jesus.

A key verse in this season for us is from Colossians chapter 2 verses 6-7. **"And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness."**

We will look together at "habits" (or

practices) that we can build into our lives to ensure that our roots are healthy. Some of these ideas may be brand new to you, or you may be very familiar, but we're encouraging everyone, to go a little deeper, and remain willing to learn more.

It's also the reason that we've created extra space and time to learn together, in our "Healthy Courses". All the courses have started well, and we're praying that everyone who is on one of the courses, will emerge on the other side more spiritually healthy than when we started!

In order to enable our "Healthy Church" season we have begun our "LifeGroup Meetings Pause". LifeGroups will still be the place of support but with less structured meetings than normal. There are still opportunities for us to meet together during this season – including LifeGroup Lunches and a **Summer BBQ (12th July)** and **Picnic (16th August)** over the summer too.



Dates for your diary:
Summer BBQ – Sunday 12th July
Summer Picnic – Sunday 16th August



During this period, we plan to take time to review our LifeGroup Structure, to ensure that we have the best approach to serve everyone well, and to remain healthy going forward, especially with more and more people wanting to become part of our church family.

We've taken time to listen to feedback from all of our LifeGroup leaders, so we can review before moving forward. We welcome your prayers as we ask the Holy Spirit to guide us.

"All Ages" Healthy

Refresh Youth Weekend is not far away! If you are a young person, or have a young person in your family – please book in and plan to be part of this significant and fun weekend away. **(17-19 July)**

We believe that to remain healthy for years to come we need a new bigger facility we can call our home! We continue to pray and believe God for this big project. Your prayers matter! We've changed the time for our prayer gatherings for the New Home For Ashwood so that even more people can be involved.... Please join us after the meeting on **24th May / 28th June / 26th July** to pray for approx. 30mins to seek God together, and we will also share

any news updates then too. Finally, advance warning about our "BIG GIVE" weekend **2-4 October!** During this weekend, we plan to create opportunities for everyone to be involved in raising funds, but also raising the profile of our new building project. Don't miss it!

Matt Bell
Senior Leader Ashwood Church



new home for ashwood

New Home for Ashwood Prayer Gatherings

We believe that right now, our prayers are the most significant part of our journey towards our New Home for Ashwood. We are encouraging everyone to pray in faith every day that God would make it possible for us to have the finances to build our new home.

We also are encouraging as many people as possible to join us each month, online (see new times below). We believe that it's as we pray and seek God that we will see the breakthrough we need! These are the dates for your diary.

Prayer Gatherings:

Sundays after the church service 12.15-12.45pm	24th May 28th June 26th July
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NHFA Giving

For donations, please scan one of the QR codes



Via Stewardship pg



Via ChurchSuite

PRAYER FOR PROVISION

Heavenly Father,
We thank you for the vision you have given us to build a house for your glory. We declare that this project is in your hands, and we trust you as our provider. You are the source of every resource, every opportunity, and every generous heart.

Lord, we ask you to stir faith and generosity among your people. Open doors for resources we have not yet imagined, raise up partners and supporters, and supply every need for this building project. Bless every gift that is given and multiply it for Your kingdom.

We declare that this building will be a place of worship, prayer, salvation, and transformation for many lives. May it stand as a testimony of Your faithfulness and your goodness for generations to come.

Remind us, Lord, that unless you build the house, the builders labour in vain. So, we place this entire project into your hands. Jehovah Jireh, our Lord who sees the need and provides. May the provision arrive in your perfect time, and let this building stand as a testimony of your faithfulness and goodness.

May your kingdom be advanced through it. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.



28 - 31
AUGUST
2026

LINCOLNSHIRE
SHOWGROUND



Tickets / Prices

The earlier you book,
the better price you get!

"Spring Saver"

4th Feb—2nd June

"Summer Saver"

3rd June—31st July

"Event Price"

1st Aug—Event

We are so excited about AWAKEN 2026

...and want to invite you, your family and our whole church to join together. We are so thrilled to see this event building and gathering momentum and we know that it is significant for the church in our nation at this time. Once again we will be on the Lincolnshire showground over the August Bank Holiday weekend expecting and experiencing a great move of the Holy Spirit as we gather together. Awaken is a time of Celebration and the strapline FAITH, FAMILY, FUN really does sum it up.

The "Spring Saver" price is
ending on 2nd June!


To book, go to:

<https://awakenevent.uk/tickets>

Most people will camp for the whole event, but it is also possible to stay in a hotel nearby (parking is freely available on site). If you can't be there for the whole weekend, you can also just book for a day or two.

There will be no Sunday service on 30th August.

If you have any issues with camping gear or transport, please talk to Janet Wright or Gisela Beighton and we will try to help you out.



prayer

Opportunities to pray TOGETHER:

We believe prayer is so important in the life of Ashwood. If you consider yourself part of our Ashwood Family – please find ways of joining with us to pray.

“Prayer Rally”

Every **Sunday** morning 9.50am at the Ashwood Centre before the meeting

“Pray First”

Fridays 7.00-7.30am on Zoom*

“Prayer Space”

Thursdays 9.30 -10.30am on Zoom*

“Touching Heaven”

Please join us! Everyone welcome! The people of God in the Presence of God. **Wednesday’s:**
1st April, 6th May, 3rd June

“Prayer for the New Home for Ashwood”

See separate section, page 11

***For Zoom meetings, find details on your weekly email.**



TRANSFORMED WORSHIP NIGHTS 2026 – Sunday Evenings 7pm.

Let’s gather together to worship and to press in to all that God has for us! Join us for a night of praise, worship and seeking God. And make sure you have the other dates for 2026! On these evenings we gather together to worship, recognising that as we do that we can be transformed in God’s presence. We often find ourselves praying for a fresh in-filling of the Holy Spirit and praying for those who need a touch from God.

**31st May /
20th Sept /
22nd Nov**



Prayer

I recently listened to John Ortberg's talk on prayer entitled "Talking to God about what we are doing together" from last year's Awaken. It was a very helpful and practical session; here are a few highlights.

He encouraged us to talk to God very naturally. He highlighted how we use the words "But I...", which can either be a way we allow ourselves to continue doing something we know is unhealthy, "but I love chocolate", "but I love buying things" or it's a way to excuse ourselves "but I don't know what to do", "but I don't have that skill" Exchange the "but I" to "But God can..."

It was another part that jumped out at me: "The goal of prayer is not to become a prayer warrior or somebody who is really good at this particular

practice. The goal of prayer is to live deeply in the awareness of God's presence.

Of course, that means we live with such a heart of surrender that the habits of good character, love, truthfulness, faithfulness and so on, have just got embedded in me by habit"

I was really struck by this as someone

who longs to grow in prayer and has wanted to be a prayer warrior at times. I would rather be (and hope that this is who I am becoming) someone who talks to God about what's going on and then prays as God leads. It takes a lot of pressure off, I don't have to get it right, I don't have to have the right words or Bible verses (although that may happen) but I simply follow Jesus' lead of only doing "what he sees (or hears) the Father doing." John 5:19

John finishes his talk with this. "The Almighty has purposes of his own. Now, that's part of what I remember when I go to prayer: The Almighty has



purposes of his own."

To listen to the whole talk go to YouTube, Ground Level

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9xRnkVwGleE>



Janet Wright





prayer local and global

Prayer: Local + Global

Reading through March/April Ashwood News again I'm encouraged and grateful for all that God is doing by His Spirit in and through Ashwood Church both locally and globally. I'm also challenged to 'keep on keepin on' praying... even when I feel like a hypocrite for writing this article because I so often fall short of my own expectations and don't always live out what I write. Together let's stay planted, rooted and fruitful in God's amazing grace and LOVE.

We enjoyed joining together with local churches in Kirkby to celebrate Holy Week, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. We have so much to celebrate everyday because of God's great LOVE for us.

I love reading John's letter in the Bible. In 1John 4:7-14 we read all about God's eternal love and the challenge for us to live our lives in His LOVE.

1John4:8-9: *Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: he sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.*

Rooted in LOVE - This is the title of the Spring IDEA magazine from

Evangelical Alliance: <https://www.eauk.org/news-and-views/idea/rooted-in-love> with encouraging articles and stories that I love reading and often inspire prayer. Matt launched a new series of 'Rooted' in his message to Ashwood Church on Sunday 3rd May. Healthy roots = healthy trees. When we're well rooted in Jesus we receive all the goodness we need for life in God's LOVE and our relationship with him.

I love to celebrate the wonders of God's creation in Spring, enjoying so many shades of green as the backdrop to bright colours of blossom, the trees bursting into new life and birds bursting into song. If creation lives to worship our creator so will I... so will I! Walking and praying around our local neighbourhood can open our eyes to so much of God's LOVE and goodness all around us, that we can easily miss as we drive or are driven.

Matthew 5:12 in The MESSAGE Bible: Jesus says, "*You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colours in the world...*"

We love to join with the global Church, from Easter Sunday to Pentecost to celebrate 50days of Eastertide, when Jesus appeared to many of his close friends proving to them his victory over death, but showing them he still carries

the scars of his suffering on the cross. Then from Ascension Day to Pentecost we can join with the global prayer movement: **'THY KINGDOM COME'**. Each of us praying for 5 friends so that more people can find and follow Jesus. You can find out more on their website: <https://www.thykingdomcome.global/thy-kingdom-come-2026>. On Pentecost Sunday we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 when the first followers of Jesus received

power to be witnesses that Jesus is ALIVE! And the Church was born... We celebrate the birthday of the Church, the Body of Christ on earth.



LINKS.charity: Whole, Healthy, Growing and full of Love: In Sam Walker's latest video blog e:link, focuses on the crucial importance of LOVE being foundational in all that we do and say. You can watch and listen by going to this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6B8BVQaNvh8&t>

You can also read and be inspired by the ongoing work of LINKS around the world by visiting: <https://www.links.charity/blog>

We continue to pray for the ongoing work of LINKS and specifically for Sam in Africa: LINKS Africa Hub in Embu, Kenya and our partnerships in Malawi through Hope Missions.

Find more details from Sam Walker on the work of Links and how Ashwood supports it on the next pages.



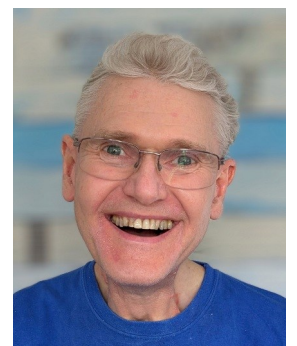
Compassion in Jesus name:

<https://www.compassionuk.org/>

We have been supporting the work of Compassion for many years through their child sponsorship programme. We see God's LOVE being lived out relationally through 8,900 local Church partnerships and projects in 29 countries around the world.

Releasing children from poverty in Jesus name - through hearts beating with his compassion. We have the privilege of connecting with the children we support through our correspondence - sending and receiving letters. This becomes a catalyst for prayer and a relationship that can bring lasting transformation and the gift of eternal life.

Dave Redfern





Ashwood to Malawi 2027

Continuing Our Church Connect Journey with Hope Missions

possibility of sending our next Ashwood team in 2027. This would build on the strong foundations already laid and continue the journey of partnership, learning, and shared mission.



Ashwood is connected with Links' partner organisation, Hope Missions, in Malawi. Over the years, the church has sent two teams to support Hope Missions through training, encouragement, and hands on involvement with their network of volunteers and community leaders.

So far, twelve Ashwood members have travelled to Malawi to empower leaders, teachers, and pastors through Hope Missions' guidance and ongoing community programmes.

The impact of these visits continues to grow and you can read more about how the 2025 trip brought further impact through out the last year on the next page.

Looking Ahead

As a church, we are exploring the

Get Involved

- Interested in hearing more about a potential 2027 team?
- Want to support a team as they go to serve Hope Missions?
- Keen to be involved in resourcing or training for a future visit?

Take the Next Step

Connect with Matt Bell or Mandy Walker to find out more about this opportunity to bless, serve, and reach beyond our local area. Your involvement could help shape the next chapter of this growing partnership.



Sam Walker

Hope Missions Ministries – Ongoing Impact

How Ashwood’s 2025 Visit Is Still Bearing Fruit

Annie Mkandawire, Director of Hope Missions Ministries (HMM), recently shared how the training from Ashwood’s 2025 team continues to bring real impact across the communities they serve:

- **Sports & Youth:** Over 250 young people have been trained through football and netball tournaments, sports evangelism, and youth conferences. Key themes like spiritual growth, agriculture, education, and mental health continue to shape and strengthen the youth.



- **Healthcare:** Community healthcare training has expanded significantly. The original group of 20 trained with Ashwood went on to train up 130 people in Lemesi village in key areas of cleanliness and sanitation. HMM continued follow-up sessions in areas of wider health matters and sanitation for another 30 community healthcare volunteers.



- **Education:** Nursery and Sunday school teachers trained by the Ashwood team are still using the resources



and methods shared. Around 20 teachers continue to receive ongoing support and development.



- **Leadership:** More than 180 leaders across six HMM-planted churches have been trained. Joint and individual church trainings have strengthened leadership maturity, discipleship, and church growth.

- **Women’s Economic Empowerment:** In Kuwala Church, 25 women are now part of a holistic discipleship and business programme, gaining practical skills and growing as confident, successful businesswomen.

Annie and the HMM team remain grateful for Ashwood’s ongoing support through prayer, resourcing, and training — a partnership that continues to strengthen communities and build long-term transformation.

International Celebration Evening

Recently we had an international celebration evening. Thank you to all who came, brought amazing food, talked about their culture and countries.

I really appreciate your support



We raised over £500 which will go to a watering system at the African Hub Kenya.



During the evening we were entertained with information on different countries, enjoyed dancing and singing from other cultures, learnt a little bit of Jamaican and enjoyed a little tast of food from around the world.



Mandy Walker

Links Hub

Peacemakers, Embu County, Kenya

As part of our recent holiday around



Kenya, we visited and stayed at the Links Hub where our son Sam Walker works for Links Charity. We spent time chilling and relaxing, getting to know the

local people who come and help. I taught some of the ladies yoghurt making, crocheting, making banana pancakes, and Welsh cakes!

Martin helped trim back some bougainvillea along a terrace area and set up a fountain in one of the ponds



It was amazing to witness the commitment of the people who help and run the centre, some who have special needs, but who are so willing to give what they can. The site is



deceptively large, incorporating several large buildings used for conferences, accommodation, cooking, prayer and lawns that can be used for marquee events

like weddings. A rented piece of land supports two milk cows, vegetables and fruit trees, along with a horticulture section for decorative plants.

A tribute to the ethos of Links to develop and support people through sustainable farming and land management.

The support that you give Links has and will transform the hub into the centre for bringing together the partners from all around Africa.

If anyone is interested in finding out more and how to support, speak to Mandy or Martin

If anyone is interested in a mission trip to Hope Missions Malawi please speak to Mandy or Matt Bell.



Mandy Walker





Ashwood LifeGroups

LifeGroups have always been important for maintaining support and care and also a place to grow spiritually.

LifeGroups are a committed place in Ashwood where you can get to know a group of people, share life together and support a smaller group of people. It's also a safe place where we encourage one another to be followers of Jesus.

In Ashwood we aim for our LifeGroups to be: Welcoming, relational, Jesus centred and a place to grow!

LifeGroup Meeting Pause

We're currently in a season of our Lifegroup Meeting Pause. As a church we are having a pause from our regular LifeGroups meetings over the Summer term, to give an opportunity for us to refocus and to have the opportunity to invest time in joining one of the four courses that we are running as a church, including: the marriage course, Emotionally Healthy Spirituality, Bible study and Freedom in Christ: Keys to Health, Wholeness and

Fruitfulness. This is something that we believe fits into our vision for the year as "Healthy Church", planted - rooted - fruitful.

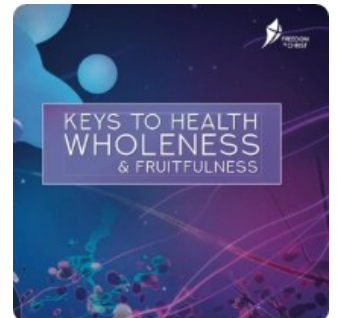
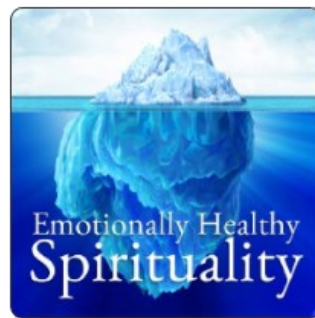
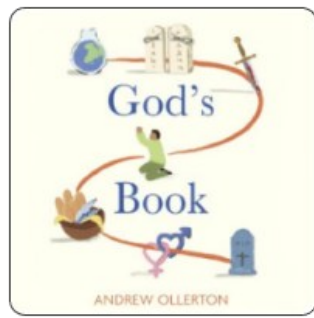
We want to emphasise that LifeGroups have not shut down, we just won't officially be meeting fortnightly in person on Monday evenings.

Our hope is that our groups will continue to support one another pastorally, the WhatsApp group chat will carry on, we just want to give an opportunity for people to refocus and invest time in the courses we are running.

The courses have got off to a brilliant start, it's been great to see how many people have joined and want to invest in themselves and their relationship with Jesus and others.

Let's continue to look after one another and be Healthy Church!





LifeGroup Together Lunches (May / June)

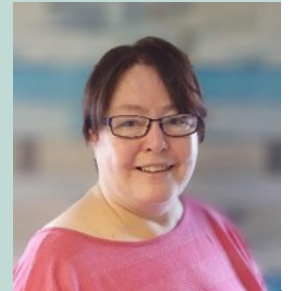
We've ran Lifegroups Together lunches a few times now and each time it's been brilliant to see people connecting and getting to know people that they might not have known previously. Particularly during our Lifegroup Pause, we thought this would be a great time to provide more opportunities for people to mix and connect with one another. Over the next few weeks our 11 Lifegroups will be meeting together over 4 Sunday lunchtimes straight after church (2 or 3 groups at a time!). We know this will be a great time to share food together, including a wide variety of cuisines from the different cultures within our wonderful church family.

Leadership Update

During one of our meetings in March, we communicated the news that Gill Isterling was stepping aside from being part of Leadership Core Team. Gill feels God is asking her to create more space in her life, so is responding to that. Gill is still part of our Ashwood Leaders and still leading one of our LifeGroups with Robin, Paul and Zoe. She will continue to oversee the work of Storehouse in a volunteer capacity.

We are so grateful for all that Gill has brought to the Leadership Core Team over the last 2 ½ years. We're grateful for her ongoing serving in other areas. She's amazing!

Thank you GILL!



Our NEXT Baptism Sunday date is 14th June

If you've never been baptised, please speak to someone, and find out more.

We already have a number of people interested in being baptised. Could this be you next time ?

Please contact your LifeGroup Leader or Youth Leader or email admin@ashwoodchurch.org.uk or bec@ashwoodchurch.org.uk to register your interest or if you would like to have a conversation.



Welcome and hospitality are really important to us at Ashwood, we long to see every person made to feel welcomed and cared for whether they are new to us or whether they have been coming to us for while. We hope people feel seen and valued from the moment they come through the church doors to the moment they leave and beyond! Every person helps to cultivate a welcoming atmosphere, but our welcome and hospitality team play a big role in sustaining this!

There's something special about seeing smiling faces

Serving on the welcome team at Ashwood has been an incredible joy for me. From the moment I joined the church, I was eager to get involved and begin serving. I've always had a passion for being part of the welcome team, even at my home church, so having this opportunity at Ashwood has truly been a blessing for both me and my family.

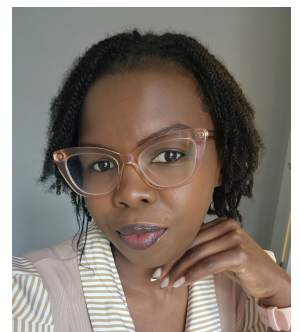
What I love most about serving is the chance to meet people from different walks of life and make them feel valued and at home. There's something so special about seeing smiling faces as people arrive, ready to worship and glorify God. A simple

greeting or warm welcome can make a big difference in someone's day and help set the tone for their entire experience.

The Bible encourages us to offer ourselves as a living sacrifice, and I believe serving is one of the ways we can live out that calling in a practical and meaningful way. Being part of the welcome team allows me to do just that.

I would truly encourage others to join the team and serve with us. The joy, fulfilment, and sense of purpose it brings is truly unmatched.

Maureen Ndururi



Why not come and be a part of our amazing welcome team and help provide a welcoming space for everyone coming into Ashwood? Whether you can make a cup of tea/coffee or simply greet people as they come in with a smile and warm welcome - we'd love to hear from you!

Chat to Janet Wright if you want to find out more!





ashwood kids

Sunday 19th April in Earthshakers Primary 2:

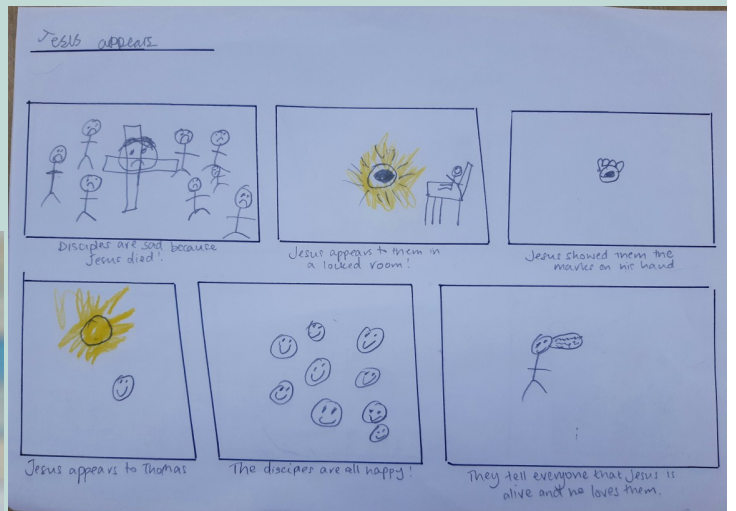
Jill Hay focused on the theme 'What's missing?' The story in John 20 when Jesus first appears to his disciples locked in fear in an upper room. It's Easter Sunday and Jesus is ALIVE... But Thomas is missing! Thomas refuses to believe his friends unless he sees Jesus for himself.

You can see in these wonderful story pictures, the children drew their own story, celebrating Jesus is ALIVE from the dead but WHO IS MISSING? The difference it made to Thomas and makes to us when we know and believe that Jesus IS ALIVE!

We want to tell others the good news, just like the first disciples.



Dave Redfern

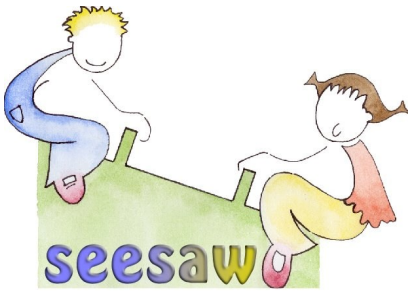


If you would like to be involved in the Elevate or children's team, please speak to Rich Reason: rich@ashwoodchurch.org.uk





Seesaw



Seesaw is the Toddler Group that Ashwood Church has run for over 20 years now, creating a safe

space for under 5's (mostly under 3's now) and their parents, grandparents, carers or childminders to come and play, chat and make friends. We run on a Tuesday and a Friday morning and regularly have between 40 and 50 children plus adults filling the main hall with chatter, laughter and the occasional cry. We have a great team of about 10 volunteers led by Cheryl Reason. On a Friday we have some students join us on work experience.

The main hall is transformed into different areas so the children can enjoy a variety of activities each week, plus some that change each week, which often includes some thing a little more messy, paint, glue, oats, water.... which the children love. During the session we

enjoy a refreshment break and always finish with some songs with actions/ dance. There is always a happy buzz in the room and over the years we have been told that some good friendships have been formed between adults and children that have continued long after their time in Seesaw.

As well as providing a safe space to come and play we have always felt it was important to provide a safe place to be, to talk, to make friends and to share experiences that might help someone else. Over the years we have seen many families come through our doors, some we have got to know very well and have supported through the ups and downs of parenting, some we have supported through some difficult times. As

children leave us to go to nursery parents regularly tell us they are going to miss coming because they feel so at home and so welcome.

It often feels very ordinary what the team does but some conversations over the last few months have shown that they



are of great significance to many. We have become like family to some, for others we might be the only people outside their own family they talk to



during the week. The children learn to interact with



others, to share, to sit and drink with others and for some the most important moment is singing and dancing together as we finish out mornings. We've also watched the students grow in confidence and learn something of

being part of a team.

What song are we singing?

At the Ground Level Leaders Conference in April Joy Blundell talked about the cultural time we are in and asked us "What song are we singing?" As she talked, I thought about Seesaw and the welcome we give, making sure parents and carers (and other visitors) are welcomed well, we check in to make sure they are ok as they settle in. I thought about the fact we listen to

their stories, whether they seem ordinary, shocking, strange, different or quite unusual. We do our best not to judge when things aren't done the 'right' way, rather get alongside to understand more of what's happening. We have been able to stand with people in

their difficult moments and share their sadness, stress and where we can we have offered support or given signposts to other support we know of, sometimes another parent in the room or an organisation outside. We've prayed with some and seen Jesus meet them. Our prayer is that we see those opportunities more and see more of our families finding and following Jesus. Please pray for the team and those who come along.

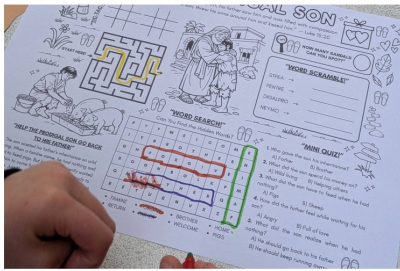
Janet Wright





No Toy Left Behind

ACE Kids Easter Holiday Club Highlights



Over the Easter holidays, Ashwood Church was transformed into Andy's Room as we hosted our Toy Story themed ACE Kids Holiday Club — and what a

fantastic few day's it was!

Across three mornings, we welcomed over 25 children each day, filling the building with energy, laughter and a real sense of community. It truly was an amazing team effort, with leaders and young leaders giving their time and heart to create something special.

At the centre of everything we did was this truth:

“This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son...”
— 1 John 4:10

Using the story and characters from

Toy Story, we explored God's love in a way that children could connect with and understand.

Day 1 - Buzz Lightyear: You Are Loved

We followed Buzz's journey as he realises, he's not who he thought he was — yet still deeply valued. This helped children see that God's love for us isn't based on what we can do, but on who we are to Him. Just like the Israelites, rescued not because of their strength but because they belonged to God, we discovered that God loves us first.



Day 2 - Woody: You Belong

Through Woody's story — feeling replaced, lost and then remembering Andy's name on his boot — we explored the story of the Prodigal Son. Children saw that even when we wander, we still belong, and God is

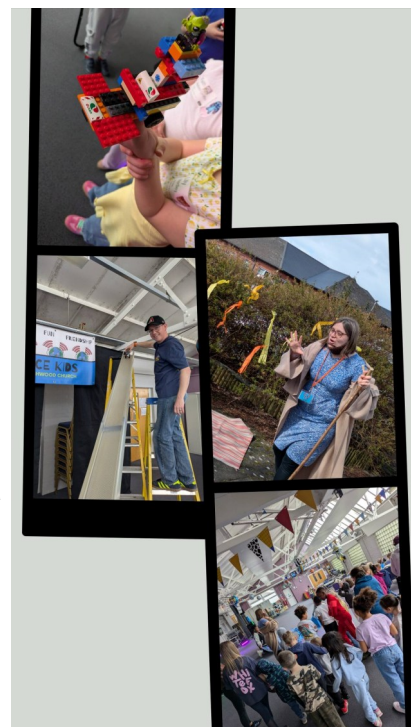
always ready to welcome us back. Our belonging isn't lost when we make mistakes.

Day 3 - The Whole Gang: No Toy Left Behind

On our final day, we brought everything



together. Looking at the moment Andy gives his toys to Bonnie; we explored what it means to give something precious for the sake of others. This pointed us to the Easter story — God's ultimate act of love in sending Jesus. Just like Andy didn't want any toy to be left behind, we discovered that God's love is for everyone.



WHAT DID WE GET UP TO?

Each morning was packed with activity, creativity and connection:

- **Hamm's Jam** — high-energy Just Dance warm-ups to get everyone moving
- **Space Ranger Missions** — team challenges that got everyone involved and working together

The energy was high, but so were the conversations. Children engaged thoughtfully, asked great questions and built strong friendships along the way.

More than the games and activities, what stood out most were the moments where children connected with the message of God's love.

Across the three days, they discovered:

- They are loved, not because of what they do, but because of who they are

- **Toy Talk** — small group time to explore the Bible stories, ask questions and pray
- **Creative crafts** that helped bring each day's theme to life
- **Singing and worship** together
- **Team** competitions between Slinky, Rex, Jessie and Bullseye

- They belong, even when they get things wrong

And through Jesus, no one is left behind

A huge thank you to everyone who made this possible. From planning and preparation to leading groups and supporting behind the scenes, it was a real team effort — and it showed.

Rich Reason
Children and Youth Team Leader





REFRESH 2026 –

An unfiltered encounter with Jesus
17–19 July 2026



REFRESH is our annual youth weekend away for young

people in Year 6 – Year 13, and every year it becomes one of the most significant and impactful moments in the life of our youth community.

Across the weekend, young people experience fun, friendship, worship, teaching, and space to encounter God in a real and personal way.

This year's theme is REFRESH: RADICAL — a weekend focused on helping young people step into an honest, unfiltered faith and encounter Jesus in a way that brings real change.

Whether a young person has grown up in church or is just beginning to explore faith, REFRESH creates a space

where friendships grow, confidence builds, and lives are genuinely impacted.

Kimberley's Story...

Kimberley, is one of our young people & she shared this after last years REFRESH:

“When the guest speaker shared their message, it felt like something I really needed to hear.

During worship I felt so much peace and joy — the songs genuinely warmed my heart, and the games were amazing too! Everyone was so supportive and friendly.

I usually find it hard to talk to people, but everyone felt so genuine that I actually wanted to connect.

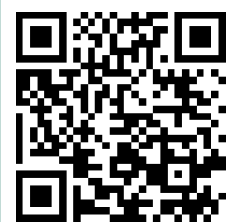
By the end of the weekend, I felt like a huge weight had lifted off my shoulders and that I was back on track again with God. - It was truly refreshing.”

Stories like this are why REFRESH matters so much.

**BOOKING
DEADLINE:
31ST MAY
2026**

Places are already filling, so we'd encourage families to book in as soon as possible.

- ✓ Scan the QR code to book and find full details.
- ✓ £10 deposit secures a place
- ✓ Booking early allows families to spread the cost
- ✓ Friends are very welcome



How you can support REFRESH

As a church family we would love your prayer and support for this weekend.

Please pray for:

- The young people attending
- Friends who may be coming along
- Our leaders as they prepare
- That many young people would encounter God in powerful ways

Help sponsor a young person:

We never want finances to be the reason a young person misses out on REFRESH.

If you're able to give, we'd love you to consider sponsoring a place or contributing towards the cost of the weekend. Your generosity could make a direct and lasting difference in a young person's life.

This isn't a pressure — just an opportunity to invest in the next generation.

If you'd like to give or find out more, please speak to Rich or Becky.

Together, we can help create space for young people to encounter Jesus and be changed.

YOUTH NIGHTS

Our youth nights are now running in a fortnightly pattern.

We now meet on the second and fourth Friday of each month (excluding half terms).



Please check the updated dates (May - July) and add them to your diary.

Rich Reason

Children and Youth Team Leader






When, Where and Who

All Friday evening sessions start at 7 pm (unless stated otherwise) at the Ashwood Centre and open for all young people in year 6 – age 18.

Stay Connected

Parents and young people can stay in the loop:

-  Join our **WhatsApp groups** for updates (Parents and Year 7+ Youth)
-  Follow us on **Instagram: [@elevateyouthashwood](https://www.instagram.com/elevateyouthashwood)** for updates, inspiration, and event info
-  Got questions or want to get connected? Contact **Rich** at rich@ashwoodchurch.org.uk

If you would like to be involved in the Elevate or children's team, please speak to Rich Reason: rich@ashwoodchurch.org.uk

Pastoral Care



Caring for the Carers

**WE CARE
YOU CARE.**

**Are you
involved in
caring for
someone?
A spouse?
A sibling?**

An elderly parent or a friend?



We have set up a WhatsApp group for those involved in caring for loved ones, so we can pray/support each other

and have social get togethers every now and then. Caring looks different for each of us, some live and care full time for someone, for some it's regularly checking in and supporting a loved one, but we all share that emotional burden of caring for someone.

If you're involved in caring for someone - whatever capacity that is -we really encourage you to get in touch and come along! Or maybe you just want to find out a bit more about it - get in touch with me: bec@ashwoodchurch.org.uk

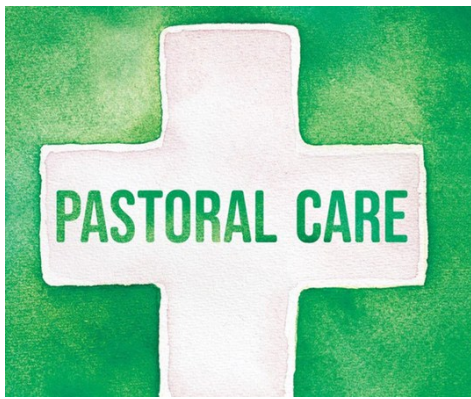
Bec Goody



We recognise that within church we have a lot of people involved in caring for relatives and we've been thinking about how we can support those within church that are involved in caring for loved ones. We're aware that this takes a toll and can be draining and that chatting with others who are in a similar position can be really helpful/encouraging.

It's great to be able to support one another, give guidance, share stories and to know you're not alone!





We know that pastoral care is really important to us as a church. Our

LifeGroups play a BIG role in looking after people and do so much to support others, and we believe that every person is responsible for pastoral care. We all have a role to play in looking out for each other, but we also have groups of people who have a particular gifting/heart/availability for pastoral care. Some of us are involved in more pastoral care than others, but each person brings so much! If you need any extra support/prayer/encouragement know we are here. We love and value this pastorally gifted church - so grateful for you all 😊

The **Pastoral Hub** focuses on the strategic pastoral care across Ashwood.



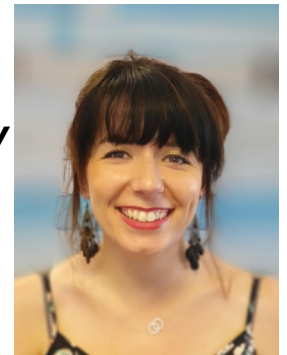
The **Pastoral Gathering** includes people that are administering pastoral care for those within and connected to Ashwood.

We're also blessed to have our **Pastoral Visiting Team** (who are involved in visiting people in hospital).

Our **Connect Team** intentionally connects with newer people within church

Please chat to me if you feel like you want to serve in a pastoral way.

Bec Goody



The lovely Denny has recently joined our pastoral gathering team and shares this month:

I have a heart for people

Why is pastoral care important to me? In 1st Peter chapter 5 verse 2, it instructs us to shepherd the flock, watching over them. I have a heart and a love for people, I love to serve them and to encourage them. I love to look for the best in people, to share empathy and have a listening ear, building meaningful relationships and being non judgemental. Praying for people and looking out for Gods flock is so important.

When I was asked to join the pastoral

team it was 'joy unspeakable', its very important to be part of a team so we can share ideas and we can grow together and take care of one another, as 'iron sharpens iron'. We share experiences together, it's good to come together, to share our passion for people and to watch over the flock. We know that God is love. It's important for me that we pray and support one another.

Denny Brown



PASSION LED US HERE

community

Cafe 22

I am so pleased to say: "Café 22 has been part of my life for 6 years now". I can't believe how time flies when you are having fun!



Seriously, when the Café started in 2019, I couldn't have predicted how many people I have seen come through the doors. Such a pleasing sight for volunteers and customers alike. Fresh bacon butties go down a treat these days. There has got to be HP brown sauce at the serving hatch. Washed down with a hot drinking chocolate, coffee or a cup of tea. We have decaffeinated and vegan!

As a volunteer in the kitchen it's a pleasure to feel the warm atmosphere and hear people enjoying other people's company. Amongst the volunteers we manage to communicate with each other and have a laugh too. People have appreciated the effort we all put in and the products we have on offer. Some of our volunteers are very good bakers I'm not one

of them lol.

What keeps me going on Mondays to serve is the knowledge that we all need support and friendships at some time in our lives. Some people are lonely and it's a safe place to come to. Others are hungry and welcome a warm meal. I myself have made some very good friendships over the years. One person I spoke to enjoys meeting at the café and conversation continues as they pass each other in the street. It all builds up a better community. For this I hope Café 22 continues and brings positivity into our community and beyond!

Pana Hudson



ashwood church

ZOE'S CAKE BAKE SALE

DELICIOUS HOME BAKED CAKES

Come and pop by and help support the rebuild of The Ashwood Centre on Portland Street

SATURDAY 13 JUNE 2026

2.00PM - 4.00PM

2 OAKTREE CLOSE, SUTTON IN ASHFIELD, NG17 5LJ

EVERY SLICE MAKES A DIFFERENCE!

Registered with FUNDRAISING REGULATOR

Charity Registration Number 6896764



Many of you know that we as a church have been running our Two's Company telephone befriending Scheme for the past 5 years. Janet set it up after the outbreak of Covid and it has continued to be a real blessing. We've had a large number of volunteers trained over the years, and a variety of church volunteers paired up with people in the community struggling with loneliness. We've seen some great friendships develop, and our volunteers have been such a blessing. However, over the past couple of years we've seen a real reduction in both the number of volunteers and the number of referrals, alongside more people accessing our in

person community groups such as Café 22 and The Gathering Place, so we have made the decision to end the befriending scheme in this format. A number of our volunteers are going to continue the relationship they have built with their friend in the community separately from Linking Lives/Two's Company. We know there are seasons for everything, whilst it's sad that this has come to an end in this format, this initiative has been such a blessing and we celebrate all God has done through it and we know that we as a church will continue to serve our community through the many groups we run.

Bec Goody



opportunities for people to mix. Jesus invited people to come and see (John 1:46).



You may be thinking "is The Gathering Place for me?" - Why not come and see? There is no set agenda or criteria, there are a variety of people that go, different ages, different backgrounds, just playing games, doing craft, chatting, drinking tea and doing life together.

Bec Goody

It's so relaxed, I look forward to going and feel safe here



Foodbank

There's a real sense of momentum building at Storehouse Foodbank, and it's all rooted in something simple but powerful: HOSPITALITY.

We've always believed that offering a warm drink, a slice of cake, and a listening ear can create space for genuine community. Recently, though, we've taken a small step further.

Over the last few weeks, we've begun serving an occasional simple meal, paired with a short Bible insight or a gentle activity. Nothing complicated — just a shared table, a moment to breathe, and an invitation to connect.



The response has been amazing. A small number of people have lingered longer, talked more openly, and

discovered new friendships around the table. It's been such a blessing that

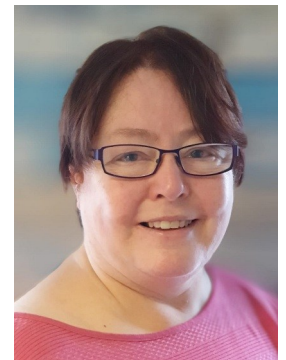
we're now exploring how to make these meals a more regular part of Storehouse life.

What's been especially encouraging is seeing how this sense of welcome is spilling over into other parts of our community. Many of our Storehouse guests have started joining in the hospitality of Café22, where they've been met with the same warmth and openness. Some have even taken the brave step of coming along to church on a Sunday, finding a place where they feel seen, valued, and at home.

These small acts of hospitality are doing something big: they're knitting together a community where everyone has a seat at the table. And we're excited to see where this journey leads next bearing in mind the prophetic word the BroadbackS brought us a couple of years ago.

Watch this space!

Gill Isterling



Summer Gardening and Cleaning

Summer Gardening Team at the Ashwood Centre:

10am -12pm Wed: 1st and 8th July.

10am -12pm Sat: 4th and 11th July.

We want to maintain our outside space, keep it tidy and welcoming for visitors and

accessible for the Seesaw toddler group and Ashwood Church to use.



Summer Cleaning and Painting:

10am-4pm Mon-Thur 27th-30th July.

The aim is to do an annual deep clean and freshen up of the Ashwood Centre to keep it looking clean and welcoming for visitors. This includes: to Rug Doctor all the carpets, and some painting.

Please speak to or message **Dave Redfern** on 07950 147509 if you're able to join the team for an hour or more on one of these days.



Ashwood Crafters

These are some of the thoughts and ideas from our recent meeting:

From the rising of the sun to the going down.

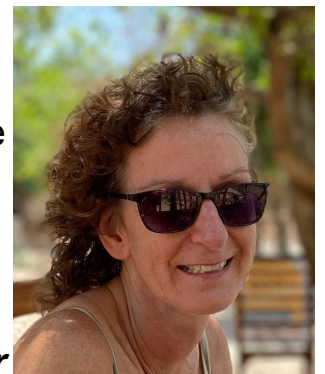
- *“You are here to be salt-seasoning bringing out the God - flavours in the world. “*
“You’re here to be light bringing out the God - colours in this world “
Matthew 5 13-15
- Each one of us has stories of the creative difference salt and light make in our lives. (Dave)
- Celebrating creation through colour and creativity. (Louise)
- *“Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad and sea resound and all that’s in it. Let the fields be jubilant and all that’s in them. Let all the trees of the forest sing for joy!*
Psalm 93
- *Bring out the God colours of the world*

You will find this picture n the entrance of Ashwood church which was the result of our evening together.



We meet some Friday nights to craft and have a WhatsApp group where we share our ideas, thoughts and creations. If you are interested, talk to

Mandy Walker



“Belonging to Ashwood” – Next Session

Sunday 31st May 12-12.45pm after the morning meeting.

If you’d like to find out what it means to be part of Ashwood – please join us for this short session. This is the perfect place to ask questions, and hear about our vision, values, and mission as a church. You can also find out how to join a LifeGroup or one of our serving teams. If you’re new to Ashwood or been around for a while this is also perfect for you. You can just turn up or let us know you’re coming

claire@ashwoodchurch.org.uk or
bec@ashwoodchurch.org.uk

Future Dates: 12 July / 20 Sept / 22 Nov

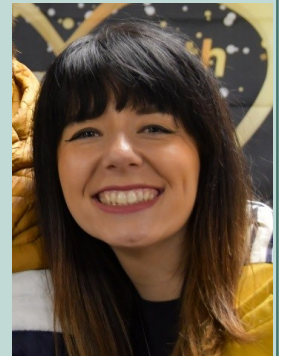


ashwood
church

Signposting

At Ashwood, we strive to create a culture of care and to support people pastorally to the best of our abilities. Some issues however are so complex and deep that they may require additional support. If you're unsure of where to go, here are a few ideas. This may be for you or someone you're supporting, but we hope you find it useful. Don't hesitate to get in touch with me for more information.

Bec Goody
Pastoral Care Team Leader



Bereavement



Parenting for Faith have some great resources to help you to talk to children about death and loss. <https://www.parentingforfaith.brf.org.uk/?s=bereavement>



Loss and Hope is a Christian charity that offers webinars and support for those who are grieving. <https://www.lossandhope.org/>

Single-friendly Church



We love our intergenerational church family, those of different ages and backgrounds, those that are married, those that are single. We want to recognise and honour those that are single, whether that is something they have embraced, maybe feel called to, or whether that can be a challenge/painful at times.

The organisation "Single friendly church" do some brilliant resources about encouraging, championing and supporting those that are single, why not have a look? <https://www.singlefriendlychurch.com/resources-for-single-christians>

Eco Tips

Month: June



Month: May

Big Impact: Make sure your pension is invested ethically. Talk to your

financial advisor

Little Stuff: Get a water butt attached to your drainpipe(s) to use in watering your garden.

Easy: Turn off the tap when not in use.



Big Impact: Repair your electricals, postpone upgrading, buy refurbished items instead of new.

Little Stuff: Use the shower instead of the bath to use less water. Try to shower in the time it takes to listen to just one of your favourite songs.

Easy: Grab a reusable water bottle, and use it! Ditch those single use plastics.

Jono Wright

Moving On!!

So, leaving Ashwood Church after nearly 40 years wasn't something that was on our radar.....but apparently it was on God's - so we're moving on!!!

The last few years have been a bit interesting to say the least...!!

Firstly, in 2023, Geoff was told that he wouldn't be able to have a new hip put in (where there wasn't one - following septic arthritis in 2020) so he would remain in a wheelchair indefinitely.... A bit of a blow! So we decided we would need to make some adaptations at home as this was, now, no longer a temporary situation. But - God had other ideas... and fast forward to March 2025 when we moved house (after a somewhat eventful journey!!) to South Normanton! We are so grateful to God - we now live in a beautiful, spacious home with brilliant facilities for Geoff!! Wow!!

Fast forward again, to the beginning of this year, and not only have we moved, but Geoff also now has a new hip!! Wow!! Amazing God!! Geoff's mobility hasn't increased but he is now

much more stable when transferring, as he's now able to stand with both feet on the floor instead of just one!!

All this time we've been a part of Ashwood Church and had no thought of that changing... However - apparently, God - again - had other ideas, and on Sunday we said our goodbyes to Ashwood! We know that God has brought us to South Normanton for our good - but also, importantly, for HIS purpose, and we now feel it's important to be part of one of the local churches here. We're sad to be leaving Ashwood, but excited to find out what adventures he has for us in this next season!! We'd very much value your prayers as we find out where God wants us to be planted.

Thank you so much for all your prayers, support and friendship over the years, which we hope will continue!!

With our love,

**Adrienne and
Geoff Hippey**

PS: If you want the full story - come for a cuppa!!!





Ashwood Church Financial Giving

EACH OF YOU SHOULD
GIVE WHAT YOU HAVE
 DECIDED IN
 YOUR HEART
 TO GIVE
 NOT RELUCTANTLY OR
 UNDER COMPULSION
 God **LOVES**
 A CHEERFUL
GIVER

We are so thankful to everyone who gives financially. We can't do anything without you! With your help, we can play our part in seeing God's Kingdom built and lives transformed for Jesus.

The easiest and most cost effective way to give to Ashwood Church is directly into the church bank account. You can make a one off bank transfer or set up a regular standing order using our bank details:

Account Name: Ashwood Church
Account Number: 00216525
Sort Code: 60-01-73

This account can be used for donations for the general work of the church and the New Home for Ashwood project (if making a donation towards the New Home for Ashwood project, please use 'NHFA' as the reference so your gift can be correctly allocated).

Alternatively, you can:

- Donate by cash during the offering on a Sunday morning
- Make a debit / credit card donation via our online **Stewardship** page (visit <https://www.stewardship.org.uk/partners/20024077> or scan the QR code)
- Make a debit / credit card donation via our online **Donate** page (visit <https://ashwoodchurch.churchsuite.com/donate> or scan the relevant QR code)
- By debit / credit card on a Sunday morning (please see Becky if you would like to donate this way)

Please note that due to local branch closures and increased banking costs, we can no longer accept cheque donations



Donate - via Stewardship page



Donate - NHFA



Donate - General Fund

	Total Giving	General Offerings	Development (NHFA) Fund*	Building Fund
March 2026	£16,175	£12,236	£2,964	£975

Finance Focus: Discipleship and Caring for People

Our vision is 'to be a spiritually healthy growing church for all ages'. We are on a journey to become more like Jesus – loving God and loving people as the church family. Growing means we can't stay static! Everyone is involved in supporting and encouraging one another to become the best versions of themselves. We want to grow both as individuals and as a church, as we see new disciples added.

As a church we value people and seek to build intentional relationships which are open and honest. We value friendship and seek to be generous in everything we do.

Our goal is to create an environment where **everyone, everywhere**, is involved in caring for one another.

Here are some of the things we have been able to do to support our values of growing and being relational. Your financial gifts, whether small or large, make a difference and have enabled these things to happen:

- Provide one to one **pastoral support** where needed
- Run our annual '**Freedom in Christ**' course in Autumn 2025
- Run a new course, '**Emotionally Healthy Woman**' in Spring 2026
- Plan and resource the new '**Healthy Church**' courses beginning at the end of April 2026 ('Keys to Health,



Wholeness & Fruitfulness', 'Emotionally Healthy Spirituality', the 'Marriage Course' and 'God's Book')

- Provide **materials** to LifeGroup leaders for running LifeGroup sessions
- Facilitate the weekly **Prayer Space** (Thursday mornings from 9.30am – 10.30am) and weekly **Pray First** (Friday mornings from 7am-7.30am) Zoom meetings
- **Give gifts** to express our love to people who are struggling or facing bereavement
- **Resource** members of our staff team to facilitate pastoral care across our church
- Enable our Pastoral Coordinator (Bec Goody) and members of the Pastoral Hub to attend **training events** including the Ground Level Leaders Conference

Thank you so much for the money you have given which has enabled us to do this and much more.

Everything we do is connected to our mission to help people find and follow Jesus!



Becky Holmes
Financial Administrator

Gift Aid

If you are a UK Tax Payer, there's some really good news! Ashwood Church can claim an extra 25p for every £1 you give from the Government, using the Gift Aid scheme. Just email

becky@ashwoodchurch.org.uk for a Gift Aid form.



Regular Meetings:

- **Sunday Morning:** Ashwood meets in the Ashwood Centre starting at 10.00am for refreshments, meeting starts at 10.30am
- **Touching Heaven Gathering:** 7.30 – 9.00pm usually 1st Wednesday in the month: 3rd June, 1st July, 2nd September- Details see page 6
- **LifeGroups** are currently on pause.
For more info, see pages 13 - to join, talk to Bec Goody We press “Pause on LifeGroups from April - June, details see pg 14/15
- **Ashwood Youth** meets on Fridays, details see page 23
- **Prayer Opportunities** see pages 6 - 11
- **New Home for Ashwood Prayer** dates: page 4
- **Belonging to Ashwood Meetings** see page 29
- **Opportunities to Serve**, see page 16,17,23
- **Transformed Worship Nights**, dates and details see page 6

Ashwood in the Community

- **Ashwood Men:** Weekly Breakfast on Thursdays 9.30 am
- **Café 22:** Mondays except Bank Holidays 9.30 am – 1 pm
- **Foodbank:** Tuesdays 2.00pm - 3.00 pm
- **Seesaw (toddlers):** Tuesdays & Fridays term time 9.30am – 11.15 am
- **The Gathering Place:** First and third Friday of the month 2-4 pm / pg 27

For Your Diaries:

12th June	Zoe’s Cake Sale	pg 26
14th June	Baptism Service	pg 15
12th July	Summer BBQ	pg 3
17th-19th July	Elevate Refresh	pg 22
16th August	Summer Picnic	pg 3
28th-31st August	Awaken	pg 13
2027	Ashwood in Malawi	pgs 10 / 13



sunday messages

The best way to get hold of our Sunday messages is the 'Talks' section of our church website (or Facebook). Here's a remind of what has been preached over the last few weeks

Sunday 22nd March	<u>Worshipping Church - Part 2</u> Paul Bell
Sunday 29th March	<u>Worshipping Church - Part 3</u> Bob Goody
Sunday 5th April	<u>Easter Sunday - 3 Greatest Days</u> Matt Bell
Sunday 12th April	<u>Worshipping Church - Part 4</u> Julian Bingham
Sunday 19th April	<u>Worshipping Church - Part 5</u> Alex Stibbard
Sunday 26th April	<u>Worshipping Church - Part 6</u> Matt Bell
Sunday 3rd May	<u>Rooted - Part 1</u> Matt Bell
Sunday 10th May	<u>Rooted - Part 2</u> Bec Goody



2026



Further information

For further information about any church activities, please speak to one of our welcome team or one of the people taking part in the meeting. Alternatively, feel free to make use of the following contact information:

Senior Leaders

Matt & Claire Bell

matt@ashwoodchurch.org /
claire@ashwoodchurch.org

Administrator

Gisela Beighton

admin@ashwoodchurch.org.uk

Children and Youth Work

Richard Reason

rich@ashwoodchurch.org.uk

Community Outreach Leader

Gill Isterling

gill@ashwoodchurch.org.uk

Pastoral Care Team Leader

Bec Goody

bec@ashwoodchurch.org.uk

Finance

Becky Holmes

becky@ashwoodchurch.org.uk

LifeGroups

Bec Goody

bec@ashwoodchurch.org.uk

Church email

admin@ashwoodchurch.org.uk

Church website

www.ashwoodchurch.org.uk

Facebook

ashwood church page

www.ashwoodchurch.org.uk

In case you miss any of the information from Ashwood News or the weekly notices, then visit www.ashwoodchurch.org.uk.

We have a Church Weekly email with lots of information to help keep you up to date with what's going on and how to get involved. To be included in the mailing list to receive this information please come along to our next "Belonging to Ashwood" Session (pg 17) or for more information, email admin@ashwoodchurch.org.uk.

Ashwood Church is a company limited by guarantee
Company registered in England & Wales Number 6946764
Registered Charity Number 1134945

Registered Address: 41 Crocus Street, Kirkby in Ashfield, Nottingham, NG17 7DY

www.ashwoodchurch.org.uk