

Growing and flourishing together

Dear friends,

We want to begin by saying a big thank you for your continued support. We've all experienced so much change over recent years, but you remain our generous, kind and supportive extended family – and for that, we are truly grateful. You can read about just a few of your amazing fundraising activities in Our Methodist Stars section.

Since we both started in our roles, our Secret Santa campaign has raised an incredible £1.6 million – our most successful year of the campaign to date. This total will help fund the vital work we provide for children, young people and families across the UK.

In February, we focused on saying thank you to our supporters, volunteers, advocates and partners for Gratitude Week.

In the same month, we released a report highlighting the structural barriers that families face in accessing work, working more hours, and in finding adequate support from the social security system when work is not a realistic option. You can read more in this pack.

Thank you to those who have let us know that you've not been getting our mailings. To make sure we manage the contact preferences of all Action for Children supporters, changes were made in how we store and use your contact details, which impacted who we could send mailings to. We're reviewing this and will make changes as needed, but if you have any questions, please do get in touch.

The cost of living crisis is affecting everyone, but the most vulnerable children and their families in the UK are facing crisis and desperately need our support.

So this year, Action for Children Sunday will take place on 9 July. There's an enclosed planner to create a special service on the day (or at any time), and a worship outline, stories, and suggestions for prayers and hymns. You can download extra copies, videos and other helpful resources from: actionforchildren.uk/faithFR.

Thank you, once again, for the many ways you support Action for Children. As the warmer days arrive, we'd love to help you plan your summer fundraising. We can share a full guide, packed full of tips, tricks and ideas, or chat through suggestions with you to get things started. Contact your local fundraiser for more.

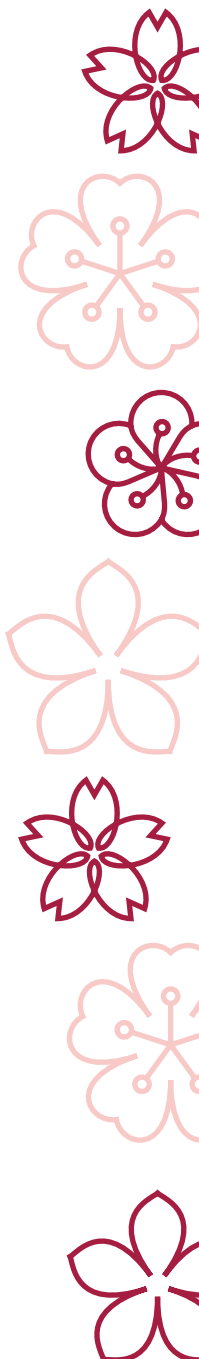
All the very best,



Katie Cartwright
Head of Regional Fundraising



Anna McCrum
Faith Partnerships Lead





This Action for Children Sunday

At Action for Children, we see every day the transformative difference that a nurturing, supportive and loving environment makes to the lives of children, young people and their families. This year, Action for Children Sunday focuses on this connectedness we have as humans, and God's commandment to love one another as we are loved by God. In these challenging times for so many families, we hope that this resource will supplement the Methodist calling as people of faith to respond to God's love through worship and mission.

Our resources are in a similar format to previous years, being prepared for us by Roots on the Web. We hope congregations of all ages and sizes will find

the worship engaging, and that it will help to deepen our connections with our Methodist community.

This year, we have created two short videos to play during a service. One features Tan Y Bryn, a home offering safe and happy childhoods to children who have experienced trauma. The other is from Terri, a mum who benefitted from our parenting classes and support. The stories also feature in the worship material. We hope these inspirational stories will help provide focus for your worship.

Thank you for your prayers, your continued commitment, and for helping us give more children and young people a safe and happy childhood.

1.95 million children could be trapped in poverty because of barriers to work – our latest research

Amidst the worst cost of living crisis in decades, we are working hard to campaign for targeted support for the most vulnerable children, and to highlight the significant barriers that millions of families have to work.

In February, we published a major report, *All Worked Out*, on the structural barriers that families face in accessing work, working more hours, and in finding adequate support from the social security system when work is not a realistic option.

Our research reveals up to 1.95 million children in the UK could be trapped in poverty and hardship due to their parents facing one or more major barriers to working, or to taking on extra work. Many of these children live in families facing multiple barriers to work.

Work isn't always a simple route out of poverty and hardship for many families. One in six workers earn below the Real Living Wage and benefit reforms have tended to push people into part-time, low-paid jobs with no prospect of progression. Our figures show there are 440,000 children living in poverty where the parent(s) are already working full-time. Couple this with the rising cost of living, and some families are at breaking point.

Other challenges include the cost and availability of childcare, and specific challenges that face single parents, parent carers and those living with a disability.

We've developed a powerful digital tool giving a snapshot of levels of child poverty and financial hardship in your area. You can use this tool and raise awareness of your local child poverty level with your MP.

Our Methodist stars

Here are just some examples of your brilliant fundraising achievements.



A big thanks to **Northallerton Methodist Church** and the generosity of their community at Christmas, raising £1,379 from carol singing.



Pat Nott, a member of **Wells Green Methodist Church**, held a Easter coffee morning, inviting the community to visit a bring and buy stall whilst enjoying hot cross buns with tea and coffee in the sunshine! A special mention goes to Doreen for her raffle-worthy Simnel cake. The local Rainbows group also had a lovely craft stall, helping take the total to around £590!



Norton Methodist Church have kindly donated £993 from Home Collection Boxes. Thank you – a total to be proud of!



Porthcawl Methodist Support Group hold a bric a brac sale at their church every weekend to raise funds for Action for Children and the church. Thank you to **Hilary Davies**, and everyone that gives so much of their time working on the stall.



Thank you to **Michael Bale**, who stepped down from chairing the **Chepstow Support Group**. Michael recently celebrated his 90th birthday and asked friends and family to donate to Action for Children, resulting in a £450 donation. **Allyson Barnes** is the new Chair of the Chepstow Support Group – welcome Allyson.



Huge thanks to **Michael Rumsey** of **Box Methodist Church** in Wiltshire, who held a sponsored 'hymnathon' across Maundy Thursday, over the Easter weekend and into Easter Monday. In this, his Diamond Jubilee year and his 60th year of playing the organ in Box churches, Michael is set to raise more than £1,500, spreading the Action for Children word, too.



Special thanks to **Rosemary Hamley** of **Callington Methodist Church**. Not only does Rosemary represent us in her community by sharing the impact of our work through talks, she has raised nearly £5,000 this year from various fundraising events and activities including a Christingle service and Home Collection Boxes.



Annual Supporter Survey 2023 – tell us what you think!



Last year, many of you completed our Annual Supporter Survey. You gave us your thoughts

on key areas of our work such as fundraising activities, communication preferences and the big issues you feel face the children and families we support. We fed these responses back to each of our teams to help shape our work.

It's been another challenging year for the vulnerable children, young people and families we support. Now, as we work to support them, your opinion truly matters.

The survey takes about 15 minutes to complete online via actionforchildren.uk/annualsurvey

If you have any questions about the Annual Survey, please get in touch with your regional contact or with Supporter Services.

Methodist Leader visits Action for Children services



We were delighted to host the Revd Graham Thompson, the President of the Methodist Conference, at our Early Childhood and Family Service (ECFS) in Norwich. ECFS provides information, support and advice to families with young children across Norfolk.

It is funded by Norfolk County Council, working in partnership with Action for Children. The ECFS service runs from venues such as libraries, community centres and schools, as well as from 15 ECFS bases across the county.

Emma Broom, Locality Services Manager for City and South Norfolk, hosted the visit. Graham heard about the challenges of the cost of living crisis for families in Norfolk and how services have adapted to support vulnerable families.

Following his time with us, Graham said,

“We should be both glad and proud of the work of Action for Children – our ‘grown up’ Methodist child, now living independently and serving others – as the charity seeks to support those who are struggling the most.”

Donate and make a difference



There are now 4.2 million children living in poverty in the UK. That's 29% of all children. So many of these children and their families will need our help.

We've seen an increase in families being impacted by the cost of living crisis, struggling to afford even the essentials like heating, food and clothing. It's hard to focus on being a child when you're worried about where your next meal will come from.

Your donation could help us be a vital lifeline for families facing breaking point. It could help us give them food, a warm home and clothes that fit. It could help us be there for more children who need us.

Please consider donating what you can afford, to help give more children in the UK a safe and happy childhood.

Donate here: actionforchildren.org.uk/afcsunday