



By our side

Dear friends,

We hope this newsletter finds you well.

It goes without saying that the past year has been extremely challenging. In the face of adversity, though, you've found ways to continue supporting Action for Children. While lockdowns put a stop to many a fundraising activity, Methodist supporters still managed to raise more than £330,000, which is a remarkable achievement.

We want to say **thank you** for sticking by us through this tough time. We truly appreciate your dedication, generosity and kindness, and, of course, your determination to help children, young people and families.

The most vulnerable children and their families have been particularly affected by the pandemic. They need our support more than ever. You can read more about the continuation of our vital End Childhood Crisis appeal in this newsletter.

This year, Action for Children Sunday takes place on 11 July. We've produced a booklet to help you plan a special service on the day (or at any other time). It includes a worship outline, stories, and suggestions for prayers and hymns.

You'll find the booklet enclosed with this newsletter. You can download extra copies, as well as other helpful resources, from: actionforchildren.org.uk/fundraise-in-church.

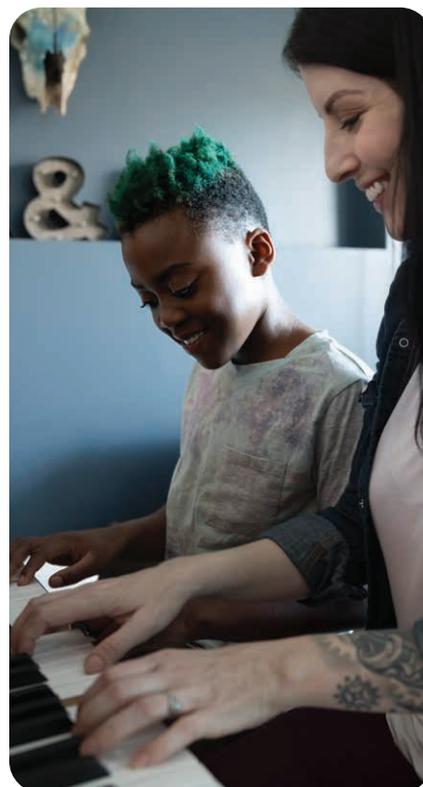
There are lots of other ways you can support us over the next few months, too. One of these is Boycott your Bed, which returns on Friday 9 July. If spending a night under the kitchen table doesn't take your fancy, you can find all sorts of fundraising activities and ideas on our website.

Thank you, once again, for everything you're doing.

God bless,

Jessica Taylor
Head of Regional Fundraising

Karis Kolawole
Faith Partnerships Lead





END CHILDHOOD CRISIS

Back in March 2020, we launched a Coronavirus Emergency Fund to immediately support vulnerable children affected by the pandemic.

Supporters' donations helped us reach around 20,000 UK children and young people in desperate need. Our frontline key workers have been a vital lifeline, too, keeping 99% of our services open through the crisis.

But one year on and vulnerable children are at breaking point. The pandemic has had a devastating impact. And with unemployment rising and many families relying on furlough, even more face financial hardship.

Supporting these children and their families now is more important than ever. They need your help.

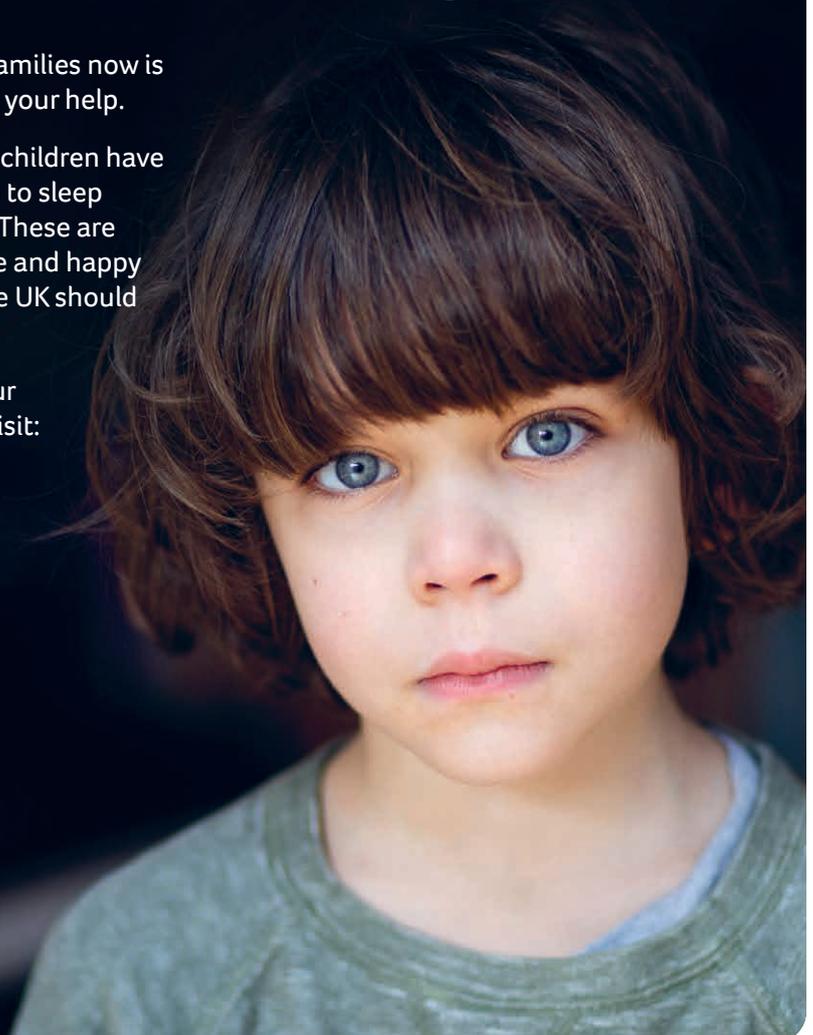
With your support, we can make sure children have enough proper food, somewhere safe to sleep and the right mental health support. These are essentials, the fundamentals of a safe and happy childhood – things that no child in the UK should go without.

To donate and find out more about our End Childhood Crisis appeal, please visit: actionforchildren.uk/end

12 months since the first lockdown began.

12 months of families struggling to cope.

12 months with children in poverty at breaking point.



Jenna's story

Jenna and her partner, Graham, live with their two-year-old, Charlotte, and Graham's four-year-old daughter from a previous relationship, Danielle.

Danielle moved in with her dad and Jenna when her birth mum couldn't look after her anymore. The police were involved, and the traumatic experience had a huge impact on Danielle.

Danielle's health visitor suggested the family get specialist support to help her overcome everything she'd been through. The family got in touch with Action for Children and one of our support workers, Louise, started working with Danielle.

Using toys and puppets, Danielle gradually began to open up. Jenna says: "Louise taught her that the police are people who make you feel safe. Now when we see police cars go past, we always try to wave, and she doesn't hide herself like she did."

But things got harder for Danielle when coronavirus hit. "I was so worried because she'd never had a solid, safe routine," explains Jenna. "It was always chopping and changing, and coronavirus just added another change. She is too little to understand, of course, but she thrives off routine."

The pandemic had a big impact on the family, too. "We started to worry financially. We both had full-time jobs and wages before coronavirus, but then, suddenly, we didn't. When Louise got in touch, I thought it was to check on Danielle. But she told us she could help us through the Coronavirus Emergency Fund."

"The money meant we could buy food and pay for the gas and electric. It was a relief because we didn't know where the next wage or support would come from. We just wanted to make sure the kids were warm and entertained."

"That support has been invaluable. Our worker is forever saying 'if you think of something, ring me'. Having that support means we can be the best parents we need to be."

Giving thanks



To celebrate her 80th birthday, **Deacon Brenda Hayes** curated a book of witty tales recounted in the Norfolk dialect. Brenda has raised a fantastic £1,800 from sales.



Reverend John Howard, a former Action for Children trustee, walked the Pennine Way (256 miles) for us in October, raising a remarkable £1,799.

Rosemary Hambly and Callington Methodist Church have raised an amazing £4,225.63 over the past 12 months.

Vickie Heydon-Matterface and Angela Newey of the Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury District made and sold Christmas Nativity window packs, raising more than £340.

Horsham Support Group donated some of the money they saved during lockdown, raising a brilliant £1,000.

Jim Godfrey's book of cartoons, *Trying Times*, not only made us giggle but also raised over £2,600. There's still time to pick up your copy – call **07979 767630** or email **churchoffice@wesleymem.org.uk**.

Step Out for Children



Plans for this year's Step Out for Children walk are still on hold due to coronavirus restrictions. We'll confirm the details as soon as it's safe to do so.

With the event cancelled in 2020, lots of supporters got creative and held their own fundraising walks. This is a great thing to do as the weather warms up!

Action for
Children



Ditch the duvet. Banish the blanket. Pack the pillow.

On Friday 9 July, join forces with family, friends or colleagues to raise money by spending the night in the most unusual place you can think of.

Will you camp out under the stars or under the stairs? Bunk down in the bathroom or the back garden? Before you settle in for the night, join us for an evening of virtual entertainment packed with famous faces, bringing people together across the UK.

Boycott your Bed and you'll bring hope to vulnerable UK children hit hardest by the pandemic. Because – while happier times are ahead for most of us – this crisis has made things even worse for children and families already in desperate need.

Wherever you sleep, the money you raise can make children's dreams of a safe and happy childhood come true.

Sign up today at: boycottyourbed.co.uk

Date for the diary

Methodist Conference, Birmingham (24 June-1 July 2021)

Restrictions permitting, we look forward to seeing lots of familiar faces at the Methodist Conference at the end of June.

