

Chair of the District

Rev Dr David M Chapman *david.chapman@behdistrict.org.uk* Office 01279 657195
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Circuit Ministers

Superintendent

Rev Michael Giles *michaelgiles2017@gmail.com* 01234 930882
Primary Pastoral Responsibilities: Kempston East, Kempston West,
(Rest day – Saturday) Stewartby LEP and Wootton

Deputy Superintendent

Rev Silas Wood *swood11@me.com* 01525 571392
Primary Pastoral Responsibilities: Greensand Community Methodist Church
(Rest day – Friday) (comprising Ampthill, Clophill, Flitwick),
Haynes and Lidlington LEP

Rev Leslie Jane Noon *leslienorthbedsmethodist@gmail.com* 01767 304635
Primary Pastoral Responsibilities: Beeston, Henlow, Langford, Sandy, Shefford,
(Rest day – Saturday) Trinity (Biggleswade) and Upper Caldecote

Rev Chris Sandy *christopher.sandy@methodist.org.uk* 01234 860484
Primary Pastoral Responsibilities: London Road (Bedford), Park Road (Bedford),
(Rest day – Friday) Priory (Bedford) and Putnoe Heights (Bedford)

Rev Paulette Tedd *paulette.tedd@outlook.com* 07591 139940
Primary Pastoral Responsibilities: Cardington LEP, Clapham, Oakley LEP,
(Probationer Study day – Wednesday Sharnbrook and Willington
Rest day – Saturday)

Circuit Stewards

Co-ordinating Circuit Steward

Jane McVey *janecmcvey@aol.com* 07866 802179
Michael Carr *mcarr49@hotmail.com* 01234 824504
Nick Guy *nick.guy1@btinternet.com* 07980 985125
Christina Sawkins *ccw281969@gmail.com* 07813 785813
Phil Timms *philiptimmskempston@yahoo.co.uk* 07732 771690

A Pastoral Letter

by Rev Silas Wood

Dear friends,

We have a little grandson who, having mastered walking and running, is now starting to make himself known verbally. One of the first things we teach a child is the importance of saying 'thank you' - even though 'ta' will do at first. However, even the most polite little ones seem to grow out of this habit as they, we, get older. So many adults seem to forget those early lessons. How often, when



driving, do you let someone through and they don't raise a hand in thanks? Or you step aside on a narrow pathway and they don't acknowledge you? And isn't it frustrating when they don't!

I wonder how frustrated God gets when we don't always remember to show our thanks, our gratitude, for all that God does for us?

Maybe today we could try to live a day of gratitude - to our family and friends, to those who help us through their jobs, to those strangers who show us a kindness. And then maybe we could try it again tomorrow - and then the next day. And maybe we could also live a day of gratitude to God, making a conscious effort to say 'thank you' whenever we see, hear, feel God at work, God's presence, in our day.

Psalm 136 opens with the words '*Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever.*' [NIV] - I think it's a good way to start every day - giving thanks to our Creator for loving us and giving us a new day to be thankful in.

Thank you for taking time to read this!

God bless. *Silas*

Renewing, sustaining and growing the ministry of the North Bedfordshire Methodist Circuit



Circuit Mission Statement

We will follow the
Holy Spirit who is
calling us to LOVE

- God with all our heart, soul, mind,
and strength
- one another, as Jesus loved His
followers
- all others, even enemies, as God
does

and be
DISCIPLES OF JESUS

- becoming like Christ
- behaving like Christ
- bringing others to meet and
follow Christ

working for
GOD'S KINGDOM

- that God's will be done
- in the Church, and on Earth
- for all, as it is in Heaven...



Our Circuit Bible Verse

The Lord has told you what is good, and this is what he requires
of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with
your God. *Micah 6:8 (NLT)*



Our Circuit Prayer

As your church
in this place,
help us to do justice,
love mercy
and walk humbly with you,
O God.
Amen.

HAYNES METHODIST CHURCH

. . . . REVISITED

by Glennis Barden

When I was first asked to write an update from Haynes I declined, because I thought, “What can I write about?” But then a voice spoke to me and said, “Write about the difficulties our church has faced these past years”.

At our Church Council meeting on 26th October 2021 our Minister told us that our small membership of 8 was not enough; it had to be 12 or more. This, I believe, had come from Conference. We were given 3 options – increase our membership to at least 12, join with another church or churches, or close. What a shock to us all, and at that time our average congregation was 12.

I thought, “Is God telling us something that we do not really want to hear? Has He got other plans for us and our church?” So all we could do was pray for God’s help and guidance.

God does move in mysterious ways, because He spoke to the hearts of three people and kindled that flame of desire to become members. They did, and with two transfers from Wilstead we had 13 members. Miracles do happen – praise the Lord.

But now in 2024 we face new challenges. I am afraid that word “money” is sadly going to be a worry, not just now but in the future, with utility bills rising, especially electricity which has nearly doubled in our case. And insurance, of course, will rise. Now our Circuit Assessment has risen by 62%.

I know that it is not just Haynes. Other small churches – and perhaps larger ones – are finding everything difficult. Like most churches our congregation are mostly pensioners, so how can we expect more than the freewill offering they give each week? Remember the widow’s mite. As we all know, some people are struggling with the cost of living, especially those living alone.

We are thankful for those who join us in fellowship each Sunday, some members, some not, and to those who have mobility and health problems but who still manage to come and worship with us. Thank you, and thank You Lord for giving them the faith and strength to come and worship with us.

This year our church is 150 years old. The rear of the church, which was the original church premises, is even older. We are going to celebrate our anniversary at our annual Harvest Festival. Our dear friend and former Minister, Rev Paul Chesworth, is coming from Wales to conduct our services on 22nd September. We always look forward to welcoming him back – Paul calls it “Coming home.”

It was God’s will all those years ago to build this lovely place. He gave knowledge to men, who must have worked so hard in those days, to build this holy place that we worship in today. I love this place of God; it is the church that I have worshipped in all my life. I must not forget my happy Sunday School days at Clophill and Maulden, but this is the place where I have had happy and sad times, always shared with loving, caring, faithful friends and family.

So what the future holds we do not know. It is in God’s hands, and it will be His will and not ours. He is in charge of all things.

I pray that the Lord our God will be with those churches, large and small, who are finding it hard to cope in these difficult times.

“We’ll praise Him for all that is past, and trust Him for all that’s to come.” MHB 69

*“We love the place, O God, wherein Thine honour dwells;
the joy of Thine abode all earthly joy excels.*

*It is the house of prayer, wherein Thy servants meet;
and Thou, O Lord, art there, Thy chosen flock to greet.*

*Lord Jesus, give us grace, on earth to love Thee more,
in heaven to see Thy face, and with Thy saints adore.” MHB 677*

Glennis Barden

KEMPSTON EAST METHODIST CHURCH

o o o o REVISITED o o o o

by Becci Statham

Kempston East is thriving!

We are delighted that our numbers are increasing, and we regularly see new faces at Sunday services. Our Sunday Club numbers dropped for a while, but we are seeing more and more young people coming along and learning about Jesus and the Bible.

We all experienced challenges and heartache throughout COVID. Thanks to a wonderful leadership team, we supported each other and our congregation through the tough times, and we used our experiences to improve our communication with the community and with the members of our congregation who are unable to attend church for a variety of reasons. Our weekly e-newsletter was born during COVID, and we have continued to produce this with a high number of people on our email list. Our services are livestreamed and can be watched on YouTube at everyone's convenience, and we regularly share our services with other churches in our Circuit through livestreaming.

The church is located on the main road through Kempston with parking to the rear of the church. The garden is easily seen from the main road, and we take every opportunity to showcase what our church is about, with features at Christmas, Easter and Remembrance Sunday, the annual Christian Aid Fayre as well as our annual outdoor service, where we served ice cream to the congregation and passers-by this year. We continue to serve soup or hot dogs on a Saturday afternoon in the garden during the warmer months and inside the Old School Hall during the colder months, and we are joyful that we continue to get a variety of people attending. During the colder months we have an Open House session on a Wednesday where everyone is welcome for some warmth, comfort and company.

The church continues to host and support a variety of clubs such as the Tibbs Dementia Foundation, a monthly Lunch Club and of course our Wesley Guild who meet on Wednesdays (see pages 8 & 9).

Our thriving Boys' and Girls' Brigades continue to meet at Kempston East and Kempston West, with their annual displays and Christmas Carols evening held at Kempston East. It is always a joy to see what the young people of Kempston have been learning.

Our Stewards' team has some new blood, and we are excited to bring new ways of sharing our faith and God's love with our local community.

Becci Statham
Steward Kempston East



Kempston East Wesley Guild



The Wesley Guild at Kempston East celebrates its 99th Anniversary this October and we are now one of the few Guilds still in being in the Circuit.

For the past couple of years we have been meeting on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month between September and May in the afternoon from 2.30pm to 4.00pm in the New School Hall at Kempston East Methodist Church (entrance in Foster Road).

We average around 25 people at each of the meetings, and you will see from our programme (page 9) that we try and make these meetings as interesting and informative as we can. We always end up with a cup of tea or coffee and a biscuit, and most importantly a good chat.

Our membership have asked that I write to all of the churches in our Circuit and make an open invitation to all of you to join us either on a regular basis or just for the odd meeting. You will certainly be made most welcome.

Roger Skipper
Guild Secretary

Kempston East Wesley Guild

Programme 2024 -2025

September

- 11th **D** Rev. Michael Giles
25th Water Aid

October

9th Grange School Children's Choir - Rachel Timms

Sunday 13th **Guild 99th Anniversary - Chris Robinson**

- 23rd **D** Rev. Terry Wright
Forces Chaplain at Chicksands

November

- 13th Mission Aviation Fellowship - Ian Sinkinson
27th Cowper Museum Olney - Tom Jones

December

- 11th Christmas Party - Guild

January

- 8th **D** Willingtones - Keith Lilley
22nd Rothsay Recorder Ensemble - Cheryl Benfield

February

- 12th The Kenya Trust - Philip Northwood
26th Desert Island Discs - Geoff Talbot

March

- 12th **D** Rev. Andrea Maffei
Vicar of The Church of the Transfiguration, Kempston
26th Bedford Town Guide - Steve Barratt

April

- 9th Mandarin Madness - David Longman
23rd **D** Geoff Talbot

May

- 7th AGM

D = Devotional

>>> NEWS FROM CHURCHES <<<

PUTNOE HEIGHTS CHURCH

Putnoe Heights Church have welcomed Kingfisher Day Centre as a new hirer following refurbishment of our Large Hall.

Kingfisher Day Centre have given us the following synopsis of their work...

Kingfisher Day Centre is a group for adults who have:

- physical disabilities
- mental health issues
- cognitive impairment through injuries/conditions and/or
- learning disabilities.

We moved to Putnoe Heights Church and Community Centre in February 2024, and we are so happy here! We settled quickly and love working with all the volunteers at the Centre. They have been so welcoming and supportive.

We accommodate a range of disabilities and are flexible in our approach and methods. We have five members of staff, and the groups generally have 10 - 20 members. We have two centres which run three days a week in Bedford and four days a week in Gamlingay. We are based on the border of Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire at the Eco Hub, Gamlingay SG19 3JR and here at Putnoe Heights Church and Community Centre, Bedford.

We undertake a variety of activities at the centres, and some people just like to come and have a natter with friends they have made at the group. It is encouraging to see that people who meet at Kingfisher begin to form such good relationships with others, that they start meeting outside of the group as well and improve their social situations. The majority of our members are with us because their condition has led them to become socially isolated, to different levels, and thus their confidence and self-esteem have been affected. Although the activities we arrange do help with development for some injuries, as a whole we are a social inclusion group with the aim of giving people the opportunity to get out of their own environments, form relationships, become socially more confident and experience new things with our support. Our members are encouraged to tell us what they would like to do.

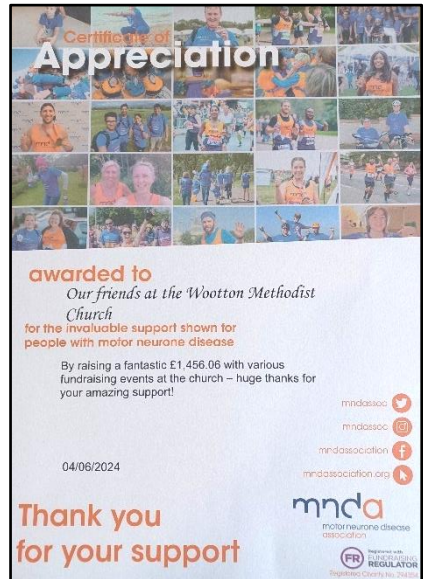
We also do day trips and try and get out and about as much as possible. We currently operate a place-by-place contract so each member is funded for their place. We have some people that attend on one day, and some on up to all four days depending on their needs.

Please contact Alison Marriott for more details on 07803 621564.
<https://www.facebook.com/kingfisherdaycentre>

WOOTTON NEW LIFE CHURCH

On Saturday 27th April, a fundraising day was held at Wootton New Life Methodist Church in aid of the Motor Neurone Disease Association in memory of Thea Lee.

Many of you will have known Thea in the Circuit and that she sadly passed away last year due to MND. We began planning our fundraiser late last year.



The day started at 2.00pm with refreshments on sale and various stalls in the church. There were stalls offering crafts made by members or groups associated with the church, a 'Guess the name of the teddy' stall, a nearly-new stall, a bookstall and a tombola. We also had a face-painting stall for our younger visitors.

We then offered hot food at 5.00pm before starting a board games evening which was held between 6.00pm and 9.00pm.

*We would like to thank all in the Circuit who supported this event and helped us to raise the amazing total of £1,454.06 on the day, with a further £66.25 through our JustGiving page and a further £70 donated since, making a grand total of **£1,590.31**.*

Carey Miller

Circuit Matters

by Jane McVey

Co-ordinating Circuit Steward

Dear Friends

At the Circuit Meeting in June, **Rev Michael Giles** announced that he would not be seeking re-appointment next year, in September 2025, as he will be retiring, or, as we call it in Methodism, 'sitting down'. We are sorry that he will not be staying with us, and it means that we will be going into Stationing this year for a **Presbyter** to start with us in 2025. The Circuit Invitation Committee will be meeting over the summer to develop a profile for the role. They will take into account not only the churches in **Michael's** section but also the wider remit of the Circuit. However, we are delighted that **Rev Silas Wood** has agreed to take on the Superintendent role when **Michael** leaves, and indeed as our current Deputy Superintendent, he will be transitioning into that role in the coming months, which will give us some continuity.

There will be other changes this autumn too.

Rev Paulette Tedd (Probationer Presbyter) joins the team and will have Primary Pastoral Responsibility for *Cardington, Clapham, Oakley, Sharnbrook* and *Willington* churches - to be known now as the *Great Ouse Mission Group*.

Rev Chris Sandy will take on the Bedford churches – *Park Road, Priory, Putnoe Heights* and *London Road* (to be known as *PPPL*), and **Rev Leslie Noon** will retain *Beeston, Sandy* and *Trinity...* but also take on *Henlow, Langford, Shefford* and *Upper Caldecote*.

We have said our farewell and thanks too to **Rev Lorna Valentine** as she moves to Cambridgeshire.

Please pray for them all as they adapt and settle in, and indeed for all churches affected. May we all be open to changes and help to make them work as best we can.

The new financial arrangements have been agreed for this coming year. The Leadership Team considered appeals from four churches over the summer and agreed to revised Circuit Assessments in most cases. Thank you to all those Treasurers who have put in a lot of work to get to the place we now are.

Thank you to Nick Guy, who has stepped down as a representative to Synod, although he remains a Circuit Steward. Stephanie Field has agreed to become a Synod representative, and we are pleased to welcome her. Finally, we continue to roll out Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training, which is mandatory for all Preachers, Worship Leaders and Stewards, and our aim is to get most people trained by the end of the calendar year...so if you haven't completed this yet, you can either do it online or watch out for more face-to-face training dates.

Jane McVey

Co-ordinating Circuit Steward



Social Action Mission Stream

This is just a brief report of new information becoming available.

- A Rocha plan to update the Eco Church surveys during the summer. Award requests using the current survey will be accepted until the end of 2024. After that, applications will need

to use the new survey. As the new survey is not yet available, I have no idea how significant the changes will be. However, I would recommend that if you are nearing completion for an award application, you expedite your outstanding work and submit asap. If you need any help please contact me.

- As Eco credentials are becoming more widely recognised as an important part of 'being church', we plan to include church Eco contact details in the next Circuit Directory.
- The recent Circuit Property Meeting introduced the idea of District energy efficiency grants, to be funded with new money from property sales levies. The process is under development, but is likely to involve making consultants available to carry out an energy audit on premises, and then make recommendations about what might be done to improve energy efficiency, payback periods etc. Churches will be able to apply for grant support from the new fund in order to take forward recommended works. It is expected that churches will need to be registered with A Rocha in order to qualify for the District energy efficiency grants. It's likely all this will be tested in two pilot Circuits across the District, and it's also very likely that North Bedfordshire will be one of those pilots.

Also just a reminder to renew your Fairtrade status if you have not done so in the last two years, and let Stephanie know the renewal date.

If you would like to become more involved in Social Action within the Circuit, please contact one of the team... Marian Blyth, David Barnes, Stephanie Field

If you have any questions about what we do, please contact Marian Blyth by email at marian.blyth@btinternet.com

NORTH BEDFORDSHIRE CIRCUIT – OUR CHURCHES

GCMC Ampthill	----- Dunstable Street, corner Chandos Road, Ampthill	MK45 2JS
Anjulita Court	----- Bramley Way, Bedford (access from Tyne Crescent)	MK41 7GD
Beeston	----- The Baulk, Beeston, Sandy	SG19 1NR
Cardington	----- Cople Road, Cardington	MK44 3SH
Clapham	----- 27 High Street, Clapham, Bedford	MK41 6EQ
GCMC Clophill	----- High Street, opposite The Causeway, Clophill, Bedford	MK45 4BE
GCMC Flitwick	----- Chapel Road, Flitwick	MK45 1EA
Haynes	----- Silver End Road, Haynes	MK45 3PS
Henlow	----- High Street, Henlow	SG16 6BS
Kempston East	----- Bedford Road, Kempston	MK42 8DA
Kempston West	----- High Street, Kempston	MK42 7AL
Langford	----- High Street, Langford	SG18 9RU
Lidlington	----- Church Street, Lidlington	MK43 0RJ
London Road, Bedford	--- London Road, corner Barford Avenue, Bedford	MK42 0NT
Oakley	----- High Street, corner Chapel Pound, Oakley	MK43 7RQ
Park Road, Bedford	-Park Road West, corner Beaconsfield Street, Bedford	MK41 7SB
Priory, Bedford	----- Newnham Avenue, Bedford	MK41 9QJ
Putnoe Heights, Bedford	--Putnoe Heights, opposite Arrow Leys, Bedford	MK41 8EB
Sandy	----- St Neots Road, opposite Engayne Avenue, Sandy	SG19 1BP
Sharnbrook	----- Park Lane, Sharnbrook	MK44 1LS
Shefford	----- Ampthill Road, Shefford	SG17 5BD
Stewartby	----- Park Crescent, Stewartby	MK43 9NL
Trinity, Biggleswade	-- Shortmead Street (near Trinity Close), Biggleswade	SG18 0AP
Upper Caldecote	-Biggleswade Road, corner Ashby Drive, Upper Caldecote	SG18 9BL
Willington	----- Station Road, corner Chapel Lane, Willington	MK44 3QH
Wootton	----- Cause End Road, Wootton	MK43 9DE

PREACHERS TAKING APPOINTMENTS

1992	Brian Addington	2008	Liz Little
1992	Roz Addington	2021	Meredith Major
2000	Brenda Ballantine	1993	Ebo Ofori-Quaah
1992	Helen Boshier	2008	Claire Peck
2009	Angela Brydon	2003	Sue Plant
2018	Paul Burgin	1975	Chris Robinson
1976	Michael Carr	2008	Glynne Rowlands
2011	Paul Cooper	1996	John Sackett
2021	Anne Foley	1983	Ros Salisbury
1997	Graham Follett	2010	Geoff Talbot
2010	Chris Fox	2009	Perilyn Thomas
2011	Hazel Hitch	1970	Janet Watts
1973	Keith Lilley	2021	Angie Woodcraft
1990	Pat Lilley		

PREACHERS UNABLE TO TAKE APPOINTMENTS

1969	David Bushman	1965	Vivian Martyn
1991	Alan Davis	1978	Jim Ragless
1966	Chris Izzard	1954	Daphne Stiles
1978	Keith Jordan	1969	Silvia Thomas
1961	Pat Larman		

PREACHER ON NOTE

Carmen Rowe

WORSHIP LEADERS

GCMC Ampthill

Patsy Aston
Margaret Byass

Beeston

Sonia Butler
Mary Millar

Clapham

Charles Abban

GCMC Clophill

Anne Cooper
Victoria Higgins

GCMC Flitwick

Maryan Pateman

Kempston East

Rosemary Simms
Stuart Simms
Terry Stevens (T)
Barbara Tipping

Langford

Jenny Broadbridge

London Road (Bedford)

John Caves
Andrew Constant

Oakley

Noel Evans
Jeanette Letch
Jane McVey

Priory (Bedford)

Lynne Gound
Marian Knights
Carmen Rowe

Putnoe Heights

Sue Allen (T)

Sandy

Jenny Endersby

Sharnbrook

Marian Blyth

Shefford

Beckie Gray (T)
Mairi Perks

Stewartby

Elaine Sullivan

Trinity (Biggleswade)

Tricia Mapletoft

Willington

Pat Davies
Keith Tompkins

(T) = In training

All Change

by Belinda Randall

Sometimes in our lives, we have to experience some big changes. Some of these changes may be sudden, unexpected or sometimes very carefully planned out (for example, changing job or moving house). Whatever it may be, when we experience ‘change’, it **can** often be unsettling. Like starting a new job: we may have been so comfortable with old routines and our ‘ways of working’, we may have unconsciously (or consciously) formed some solid habits, that would be difficult to change. So much so, many of us find it very difficult to manage changes like this. And as we go through our lives, maybe these bigger changes become less and less frequent. For example, for me, reflecting now, I think I would find it very unsettling and daunting to be moving house and / or changing job every year.

As a secondary school teacher, **I** regularly reflect on all the big changes that occur at the start of every academic year, for teachers but also for our students (children). And how some of these changes so closely align to some of the biggest changes we face in our lifetimes.

Just like changing job...

- Our children may have a new teacher, or many new teachers. They have to establish new relationships with them - *similar to getting a new boss with new colleagues.*
- Children moving to a new school will have to understand **all** of the new school rules and expectations of them - *just like in a new place of work.*

- Children and their families may have to **do** some shopping before the academic year, to buy a new uniform, stationery or books - *just like equipping yourself to work for a new company.*

Just like moving house...

- Teachers often move classrooms. They may have accumulated lots of **things** over the course of the year (or longer) and are required to move to a new setting and make their new classroom ‘their own’ - *a bit like decluttering and decorating a new house.*
- Students will start the academic year with a new timetable, requiring them to find new rooms and find new ways of getting from one classroom to the next, **through** different corridors and stairwells - *just like learning to live in a new building.*
- For children changing school, they will have to get used to completely new surroundings, surrounded by new people - *like getting settled in a new neighbourhood.*

This is definitely not an exhaustive list, but hopefully gives some insight into how the start of EVERY academic year incurs lots of significant, and often unsettling, changes for many people in the education sector.

But, for teachers and students (and anyone else that may be affected by these types of changes), we must not forget the comfort that God gives, in His Word. Even though we can’t see **Him**, let us take comfort that He will see us through, encourage us and help us manage these difficult changes...

I can do all things through Him (Philippians 4:13 NIV)

Belinda Randall

Howard Memorial Church



Methodist Women
in Britain

For women, for justice, for Christ

**Methodist Women
in Britain (MWiB)
~ Circuit News ~**

DISTRICT DAY : DUNSTABLE METHODIST CHURCH

On 23rd May I was able to take two other members of Langford Methodist Church to the MWiB District Day at Dunstable where we met six Ukrainian women who have settled in the area, some before the current Ukrainian conflict, others because of it. Sandra Robey from North Herts has written her thoughts from the day, which she has allowed me to reproduce here:

“It was both a humbling, and sometimes harrowing experience, to hear their stories, and during the hours we spent together, we shared our mutual love for God. Never has the singing of “Beauty for Brokenness” had more meaning, and there were not too many dry eyes. After worship, the Ukrainian women stepped up and shared their experiences and answered our questions. We heard from one young woman who said, with great passion, that her duty now was to keep her daughter safe. There was some humour, as she told us her eight-year-old girl was always correcting her English pronunciation... They attend local churches in the area... and spoke of the welcome they had received, how “thankful” they are on behalf of their country, to have the support of the UK and other countries in their fight to remain an independent country. We were also given a history of years of domination, and it is quite easy to see how determined they are to fight for justice.

I have never heard the words ‘thank you’ expressed so many times in so few short hours... The only real giveaway to what they have experienced, and are experiencing, was their sad eyes. A 63-year-old grandma telling us she needed to talk about her son, formerly a teacher, now a soldier! There were times when it became almost too much to absorb. But by golly, it made us all realise how many blessings we have.....

In the afternoon session, we wrote down our prayers for Ukraine, which we later dedicated and presented to the women, to enable them to share with their church and Ukrainian friends.

The Ukrainian women also wrote this prayer for us ... this is what they said...

“Thank you for praying for us. We cannot express our gratitude verbally or in writing, but we would like you to know that we mention you and your kindness in our prayers. God bless you all. Lots of love from Ukraine.”

Thank you to Sandra for this account.

We also had time in the afternoon to hear three dramas based on women of the Bible written by Deaconess Denise Creed. They were all beautifully read: one from a young woman in the synagogue in Nazareth when Jesus preached there at the beginning of his ministry; one from a servant girl in the home of Martha and Mary in Bethany, and a moving account from the woman who dared to reach out and touch the hem of Jesus' garment.

It was a special day for us all, and one we will long remember - well worth the drive in pouring rain both ways!

CIRCUIT EASTER OFFERING SERVICE

On 2nd June we held the Circuit Easter Offering Service at Putnoe Heights Methodist Church. It was a lovely service on the subject “Let Justice Roll”, but with a very disappointing attendance. Most of the attendees were actually taking part in the service, and grateful thanks are extended to them for their willingness to be involved, especially to Jenny Snelson and others at Putnoe Heights who took part and served refreshments. I also record my thanks to Rev Lorna Valentine who has been a good supporter of MWiB during her time here. We shall miss her and wish her well in Wisbech.

Our Treasurer, Linda Pitts, has written some notes about this year's Easter Offering which I summarise here: 19 of the 23 churches in the Circuit contributed to the amazing total of £1,848.25. This was made up of £1,662.75 from the envelope donations, £57.00 from the Dedication Service collection and Gift Aid of £128.50 sent by Treasurers. There is still some Gift Aid to be finalised from this year's donations which should be included in next year's Offerings. The total is £84.35 down on last year's magnificent total of £1,932.60.

Grateful thanks are extended to all who contributed in any way, and I offer my personal thanks to Linda, who does a great job as Treasurer.

Jenny Broadbridge
Circuit MWiB President

MWiB is a Registered Charity No: 1156626

A helping hand for hungry people :

Zimbabwe Victims' Support Fund (ZVSF)

Priory Methodist Church's links with this small charity go back many years and arose out of some direct connections to the country. Rev David and Wilma Winwood served there for five years and Elaine and Les Leach moved here from Zimbabwe 45 years ago, but both



families have stayed in touch with people there and have shared their experiences and concerns about the country with Priory members. As a result, several people receive regular updates and support the charity financially. Other churches in the Circuit have sometimes done the same.

Our most recent effort was the May charity Coffee Morning in aid of ZVSF: money was raised by the sale of drinks and cakes, donations and the opportunity to buy a variety of craft items, fabrics and other things from the country. The Church Treasurer was able to send the magnificent total of £800 to the fund.

The people of Zimbabwe are victims of many things – hunger, lack of medicines, inflation, an oppressive government where elections are fixed and opposition is quashed. Climate change is adding to their troubles, with well below average rainfall and searing temperatures affecting crops. The lack of nutrition and of clean water leads to serious disease, and medical care is virtually non-existent. ZVSF works in Matabeleland, a region which is now mostly classified as being in either the “Crisis” or “Stressed” level used by the Famine Early Warning Systems Network.

The charity's main work is to provide food and seed maize to desperate people in some of the poorest settlements and to five primary schools. Because of the deteriorating situation, in December 2023 the charity doubled the amount of mealie meal being distributed. A highly nutritious food known as e'Pap is provided for the severely malnourished. This aid is distributed, often at considerable risk, by pastors, community workers and volunteers who share not only food but also the love of God and pastoral care with the suffering people. In addition, a garden scheme has been established, with a solar pump for the borehole, irrigation equipment and starter packets of seeds for each family who joins, with an aim of helping 125 families.

Details of ZVSF's work can be found on their website:-
<https://www.zimbabwewictimssupportfund.org/>

Donations can be made via the website or direct to:-
Graham Matthews (Treasurer)
53 Renda Road, Holbury, Southampton SO45 2LX

Below is a prayer of solidarity from the charity's website.

*God of power and truth,
May your peace rest with the restless of Zimbabwe;
May your love inspire the hearts of those who long and
work for justice;
May your healing touch the wounds of those suffering
and bereaved;
May your truth be spoken in dangerous places;
May we not be idle in working and praying, longing and searching for
your kingdom in this broken world.
Amen*



Liz Little (Priory)

Rev Leslie Noon - Sabbatical Reflections April to June 2024

When a Minister has a Sabbatical due, we are required to fill in an application form to indicate our aims, reasons and potential fruits. This is what I wrote:

Aims: *To rest, to reflect and to explore new and creative ways of praying.*

Reasons: *I find it hard to relax and this has a knock-on effect on my prayer life, as I'm finding it increasingly hard to 'be still in God's presence'. I've never found 'traditional' prayer groups work well for me, or indeed lots of words spoken in prayer. I'd like to be more honest about this – perhaps I'm not the only one – and to explore ways that I am able to pray.*

Potential Fruits: *I hope for a renewed prayer life, which I may be able to share with others. In addition, I'm interested in ways in which creative arts could generally enhance our understanding and exploration of faith.*

Reflection

In some ways my Sabbatical achieved *less* than I was hoping for. In other ways it achieved *more* than I was hoping for!

I had hoped that by using creativity my prayer life would be renewed. Well, I guess it's all about what we consider to be prayer. I did not find it any easier on my Sabbatical to spend a set time each day in prayer, and I'm disappointed in myself for that. But perhaps I am missing something here. Because on my retreat and during those times when I set myself a small 'art project', I did indeed 'relax' into God's presence. My mind did become a little clearer, thoughts came to me which I tried to capture in both colour, image and writing. During these times I didn't set out to 'pray', but if prayer is about a deepening awareness of God, then I think I was praying.

I started a journal, using a book I had been given by a member of one of my congregations, to create art and reflect on it. This was 'a good thing' – it started to feel like a 'whole' process, rather than random times of putting things on paper. I think this is part of my character – I felt I was building something and I now have something tangible to show.

The highlights of my Sabbatical in terms of creativity were:

- A retreat at Sheldon Christian Retreat Centre in Devon during my second week. This was a gift of space and peace and I spent most mornings in the beautiful art room.
- Four separate days that I spent with Rev Jenny Spouge, who immersed me in forms of creativity that I would not otherwise have tried and who prompted me to think theologically about colour and art. It was with Jenny that I realised that it was colour itself that speaks deeply to me – how colours blend and contrast and how colour can speak to us of God. In addition, she helped me to understand that in creativity I am drawn to ‘approximations’ rather than ‘still life’ – perhaps because I can’t draw, so any medium that is more an ‘approximation’ is so much more appealing and satisfying.
- Through my creativity I began to take more notice of the world around me – colours and shapes, and I’m pleased about that.

Other highlights

- Wedding of my nephew in Turkey, at which I conducted the open-air beach ceremony.
- Space, peace and especially more time spent with family.

I am grateful to the Methodist Church and the Circuit for the gift of my Sabbatical. I return to ministry refreshed, renewed and energized. The final ‘creating’ I did was two canvasses which speak to me of colour and life – one a collage of scrap paper and the other done in acrylics.



The Last Taboo Workshop

This workshop, which was held at GCMC Amptill was run by MHA and led by Rachel Drury. The aim of the morning was to help us understand why we should talk about death and dying, why those conversations might be hard, and to increase our confidence and comfort when talking about dying and death. We looked at why we should be having these conversations, why we might be afraid and at the importance of spirituality at the end of life. The workshop helped us think about how we can talk about our final wishes, how we want to be remembered and how to have those conversations with our loved ones.

There were questions, videos, conversations and sharing of stories and experiences. All who attended said how helpful they found it, that it wasn't morbid (as they were worried it might be) and that they feel more confident now in talking with loved ones about end of life. It really was helpful and encouraging, and we would recommend going if you have the opportunity.

Rev Silas Wood



SAFEGUARDING SUNDAY

Did you even know there is such a thing as Safeguarding Sunday? To be honest I did not until last year, but it fitted with my idea for creating and leading a Safeguarding Café Worship. Having trialled it with Putnoe Heights, I led worship for the first time on Safeguarding Sunday at Langford. I was very nervous both times as I am not a Worship Leader or Local Preacher, but I had the confidence that the Ministers had helped me put it together, and I think my inner thespian came out to help! I have already used the service in eight churches across the Circuit and have had some positive feedback and discussions, especially around the words of the hymns I included. Safeguarding Sunday this year is on 17th November and I will be leading worship at GCMC Flitwick using the Safeguarding Café Worship that I have created. I am enjoying meeting people around the Circuit, sharing how Safeguarding is within our everyday Christian life and easing the shortage of preachers on the Circuit Plan!

Talking about Safeguarding Sunday, Carolyn Godfrey, Vice-President of Conference 2024/2025 said "In our churches, projects and communities we all want to feel safe and valued. As a Methodist people, and as

individuals, we all have a part to play in making that happen. Creating safe spaces is a step toward meeting that fundamental need. Sometimes this may require letting go of something important to make space for something that makes others feel safe. This may just mean we need to be flexible in our thinking and recognise that not everyone experiences the world like we do. Experiences in the past and present will inform what we need to make us feel safe. We all need to listen and create the opportunity for quiet voices to be heard, and let those voices inform what we do”.

Safeguarding Sunday is an opportunity to reflect on how Safeguarding is an integral part of who we are and what we do, and how we can create spaces that make ourselves and others feel safe. We should not just think about this on Safeguarding Sunday of course!

In the famous Rule of Life attributed to John Wesley, we read:

*“Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can.”*

Isn't that Safeguarding?

Stephanie Field

Circuit Safeguarding Officer



FROM THE EDITOR ...

Do you value this magazine?

Would you miss it if it were no longer produced – online or in print?

When I step down from the role of Editor next summer, it will be necessary for someone to take on that role, otherwise the magazine will not be able to continue in its present form.

If you are interested, I am, of course, very happy to talk through with you what is required. There is a lot of nitty-gritty that you will need to be aware of before committing to the role, but ...

... general attributes are as mentioned last time:

- a desire to connect our large and diverse Circuit

- the ability to work in a team
- attention to detail
- a sense of humour (this is vital!)

On the other hand ...

... is there a better way of communicating and connecting with all the folk in our Circuit – not just those ‘in the know’?

If you have thoughts on any of this, please do make your views known. Contact details for the Magazine Team and the Circuit Leadership Team are all in the magazine.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Cheryl Benfield



Messy Church is part of The Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF), which is registered as a charity, number 233280 www.brf.org.uk

Messy Church enables people of all ages to belong to Christ together through their local church. It is a way of being Church which is particularly suited to families, but welcoming to all.

It usually consists of all-age craft activities, worship and a meal for all the family. There is no fixed charge, but donations are welcome to cover costs. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Please check church websites or Facebook pages for details regarding Messy Church events around the Circuit.

LONDON ROAD (Bedford)

A good number of people came along to our Messy Church on Saturday 6th July. If you have not come across the *Cheeky Pandas*, do check them out as it was with their help that we learned about what “faithfulness” means. In our worship session we were reminded that God always keeps His promises.

<https://cheekypandas.com/>

John Caves

OAKLEY

Messy Church for All takes place after school from 3.30pm – 5.30pm at Oakley Methodist Church (all ages welcome – all children to be accompanied). Sessions include a two-course meal for all at approximately 5.00pm.



Dates are as follows:-

Tuesdays – September 17th, October 15th, November 19th and December 17th.

If possible, please do let us know that you can come by calling 01234 824504 or sending an email to mcarr49@hotmail.com
Contact Jan Follett 07740 863 215 or Michael Carr for more details.

There are also sessions for pre-school age children every Thursday in term-time only from 10.00am – 11.45am at St Mary's Church in Oakley.

These sessions include a drink and fruit snack.

TRINITY (Biggleswade)

Messy Church happens on the third Saturday of the month.

Families are invited to join in crafts, activities, Christian stories and enjoy a meal together.

Dates are as follows:-

Saturdays 21st September, 19th October, 16th November and 21st December.

Sessions are from 10.30am – 12.30pm with lunch included.

Watch our Facebook page for the 'theme of the month'.

It is very helpful to know if you are coming!

Please indicate on the Facebook page or send an email to bmapletoft@hotmail.com

WILLINGTON

This year we have changed to a Thursday for Messy Church, usually the third Thursday of the month.

Dates are as follows:-

Thursdays 19th September, 17th October and 21st November. Date for December is yet to be decided

All from 3.15pm - 5.30pm.

Please check with Pat on 01234 838667.

Circuit Diary Dates

FOR DETAILS OF OTHER EVENTS AROUND THE CIRCUIT PLEASE
SEE THE CIRCUIT WEBSITE www.NorthBedsMethodist.org.uk

AND THE CIRCUIT FACEBOOK PAGE
www.Facebook.com/NorthBedfordshireMethodistCircuit

*The events listed below may be subject to hybrid arrangements.
Please check relevant information prior to attendance.*

Circuit Men's Luncheon Fellowship is held
on the second Wednesday of each month (October to May inclusive)
at **Priory, Bedford** from 12.15pm until around 2.30pm.
Please tell Mike Elliott (mike.elliott@zapboing.com) if you are interested
and he will send you any updated information and reminders.

AUGUST

Tues 20th	3.00pm	Mission Resources Mission Stream using Zoom
Thurs 29th	7.00pm	Welcome Service for Rev Lorna Valentine at Upwell Methodist Church Upwell, Nr Wisbech, Cambs PE14 9DQ

SEPTEMBER

Sun 1st	3.00pm	Welcome Service for Rev Paulette Tedd at Oakley
Mon 9th	7.30pm	Circuit Meeting at Priory
Sat 14th	10.00am	District Synod in the North Bedfordshire Circuit at Stratton School, Biggleswade

OCTOBER

Thurs 31st	7.30pm	Local Preachers' and Worship Leaders' Meeting using Zoom
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NOVEMBER

Wed 6th	7.00pm	Church Safeguarding Officers' Meeting using Zoom
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Ministers in other appointments

Rev Chrissie Howe		c/o District Office
Rev Terry Wright (Forces Chaplain at Chicksands)	<i>terry.wright144@mod.gov.uk</i>	07581 009784

Ecumenical, Authorised & Associate Ministers

Rev Sarah Burrow Anglican (Anjulita Court and Ladyslaude Court MHA Chaplain)	<i>sarah.burrow@mha.org.uk</i>	01234 273642
Rev Martin Truscott URC (Minister - Cardington)	<i>martintruscott@gmail.com</i>	07989 965172
Rev Catherine Wilson Anglican (Vicar at St Mary's Church, Oakley)	<i>vicar@bromhambenefice.org</i>	01234 825665
Rev Petra Yates Anglican (Curate at St Mary's Church, Oakley)	<i>curate@bromhambenefice.org</i>	07504 118405

Supernumerary Ministers

Rev Richard Barrett	<i>regbarrett2@btinternet.com</i>	01767 312723
Rev David Bown	<i>davidbown47@hotmail.co.uk</i>	01234 589194
Rev Julie Bradshaw	<i>julieiw2@gmail.com</i>	01234 405530
Rev Bill Davies	<i>wjdavies35@outlook.com</i>	01234 210918
Rev Douglas Ford		
Rev Jim Gorringe	<i>jimgorringe@icloud.com</i>	01234 216352
Rev Cassandra Howes	<i>cassandra.howes@gmail.com</i>	01234 793177
Rev Alan Kirk	<i>alankirk58@hotmail.com</i>	01234 317699
Deacon Vera Pearson		01234 270737
Rev David Winwood	<i>revwin.64@gmail.com</i>	01234 359930

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Circuit Property Secretary

Richard Ward	<i>richard.ward4@btinternet.com</i>	01234 852400
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Circuit Meeting Minute Taker

Anne Cooper

Circuit Safeguarding Officer

Stephanie Field	<i>northbedssafeguarding@gmail.com</i>	07522 928936
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Circuit Manager

Stephanie Field	<i>northbedscircuitoffice@gmail.com</i>	07522 928936
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Stephanie Field	<i>northbedscircuitoffice@gmail.com</i>	07522 928936

Churches should send their dates for the next Plan (with details of preachers they have booked) to **their Minister** by **Sunday 29th September**

Preachers should enter their availability on Chrestos by **Sunday 29th September**

All **Articles** for the next edition of the Circuit Magazine to a member of the editorial team no later than **Sunday 6th October** please

The Circuit Manager (Stephanie Field) is mostly home based, and can be contacted either by email northbedscircuitoffice@gmail.com or mobile 07522 928936. She does not work on Fridays.

The Circuit Finance Officer (Damilola Obajemu) works on Mondays 9.00am-2.00pm, and Tuesdays and Wednesdays 9.00am-4.00pm, and she can be contacted either by email northbedsfinance@gmail.com or mobile 07798 808988.

Both are happy to meet people at the Circuit Office if required.

Circuit Office c/o Willington Methodist Church,
Station Road, corner Chapel Lane, Willington MK44 3QH

Magazine editorial information

A meeting to discuss the content of the next issue will be held using Zoom on **Monday 26th August** at 7.30pm

EVERYONE WELCOME

For Zoom details, contact an editorial team member (see page 31)

Communication: We are trying to communicate the Circuit News by the most effective methods we have available, which include email, Circuit and church websites and a limited number of printed copies.

IMPORTANT: If you are reading a paper copy of this magazine, then please pass to another person or recycle once you have finished with it. Thank you.

Contact details can be found via the Circuit Directory or via the Circuit Office on 07522 928936

see also The Circuit website at www.northbedsmethodist.org.uk
Circuit Charity Registration No. 1129523