

# Magazine

34/1

Issue No.43

Spring 2022



**...God has made everything**

**beautiful for its own time**

**Ecclesiastes 3:11 NLT**

The events listed below may be subject to hybrid arrangements as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please check relevant information prior to planning attendance.

Circuit information...see inside for further details

- Lent, Holy Week and Easter Services can be found on pages 18 - 20
- Ash Wednesday Circuit Service using Zoom at 7.00pm, see page 18

For diary dates, see page 27

# Circuit Mission Statement

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

and be  
DISCIPLES OF JESUS

working for  
GOD'S KINGDOM

- God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength
- one another, as Jesus loved His followers
- all others, even enemies, as God does
- becoming like Christ
- behaving like Christ
- bringing others to meet and follow Christ
- that God's will be done
- in the Church, and on Earth
- for all, as it is in Heaven...

## Circuit Prayer

Bind us together, Lord,  
in Love, Peace and Trust.  
Build us together, Lord,  
in Spirit, Faith and Truth.  
Unite us,  
so that together in your strength  
and following your Holy Spirit,  
we may work for your Kingdom  
as disciples of Jesus Christ,  
our Lord and Saviour.  
Amen.

# ***A Pastoral Letter***

by Rev Chris Sandy

From the Manse...

Grace and Peace to you from  
God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

## **A Provocative Church and a New World!!!**

Friends, it is another moment for us to reflect together about the Church. What is the Church? It can be relative and may have different meanings to different people. If I may prompt your thoughts however, could the Church be the building where we usually congregate? If so...now reflect whether the building (church) is fulfilling the great commission as outlined in Matthew 28:19-20 ***“<sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,<sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age”*** (NRSV). If the Church means the people of God, how do you relate that to the text and what part of it are we fulfilling, especially during a period like this?

Is there something we have to offer to those outside the periphery of our community that may make a difference in their lives? Unless there is something about the Church that intrigues, entices, or provokes, then our existence will be of little or no essence.

Did I also hear you say, *‘What is he talking about – a new world?’* Yes, I mean a new world, where there would be no more pain or sorrow, no more sickness or death...Isaiah 65:17 ***“For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind.”*** (NRSV).

Friends, the last 18 months to two years in our world and nation has been a period of catching up with things that really matter in life and society. There may have been heartaches and pains, tears and fear, but one thing I would like us to reflect upon is how it has helped us to

slow down: to allow the earth to breathe, our bodies to rest and heal, our spiritual reflectors to be energised, and our sense of community to be rekindled with the fire of love and care for one another.

Many a time we tend not to focus on the negatives but on the good stuff. For us to truly understand the tranquillity, peace, freedom, and salvation we enjoy, we need to face the realities of the discontinuities and negatives that permeate the vicinity of the good, the pleasant, the freedom and the salvific grace.

I reminded some of my congregations about the harsh realities of the Christmas story and someone said, 'Well, people do not want to talk about sad things'. Friends, we can have a new world, when we as a nation and people turn back to God, face the realities of our context, ask ourselves hard questions and genuinely, with God's help, seek to change our stories.

I have a dream of a new world, a new context, and a new story. A provocative Church where the liquid and static church worship alongside each other; where hybridity becomes the new norm, where the move of the Holy Spirit shapes the Church into a new culture of worship and being.

I have a dream of a new world, a world free of wars and sickness, where the nations will be self-sufficient and free of debt. I have a dream of a world where the Church will be unified in Christ Jesus and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed. Every one of us has a part to play and in this new year, friends, let us resolve to change our story and context. Let us **"Seek good and not evil, that we may live"** (Amos 5:14 – NRSV).

*Stay safe and stay well. Every blessing for the New Year.*

*Rev Chris Sandy*

Minister with pastoral responsibility for  
Sharnbrook, Clapham, London Road, Oakley  
and Park Road Methodist Churches.

## **NEW PREACHER ON THE PLAN – CHRIS ROBINSON**

I was a post-war baby born into a Methodist family in Hull, the middle one of three boys. My father was Sunday School Superintendent and Circuit Steward and mother taught in the Beginners' Department. I became a member of the Church aged 14 and with YPF (Young People's Fellowship) and Youth Club and badminton, attended several times a week!

At university I joined Meth Soc, whose study groups each adopted a village chapel around Cambridge. In one (Longstanton I recall) I preached my first sermon. However, it was the Christian Union in my college who fostered and confirmed my Christian beliefs and need for a personal commitment now I was away from home.

With a Geography degree and Teaching Certificate, I taught in state schools in Gloucester, S.E. London and Aylesbury, then in the Methodist boarding school in North Devon called Shebbear College. After four crucial years there as Deputy Head, I was appointed Head of Hipperholme Grammar School near Halifax, a post I held for 17 years before retirement in 2005.

In each place, I combined career with preaching regularly (usually fortnightly) as well as playing a part in the local Methodist church. The one in Hipperholme became an LEP (Local Ecumenical Partnership) when it joined with a local URC (United Reformed Church) congregation and was much strengthened as a result.

My wife Barbara, whom I met in Bristol as a fellow teacher in training, was equally involved in the churches we joined in secretarial and

pastoral roles, alongside being mother of our three children born in Waddesdon, more famous for its Rothschild Manor (National Trust) than for our nine years there. Barbara died of cancer just before Christmas 2018, hence my move in November 2020 to Bedfordshire where two of my children (and five grandchildren) were living.

When restrictions were lifted, I joined Priory Methodist where my daughter Helen is a member, and from August 2021 have been on the Circuit Plan, so enjoying meeting the varied congregations in North Bedfordshire. One of my first services was at Sharnbrook where my son lives, and he graciously joined the congregation for the day!

During the pandemic I had only preached three or four times on Zoom, so it was a sort of sabbatical for me, and I became a regular member of the congregation by computer at Central Hall Westminster, until my former church in Hipperholme started Zooming – it rather blurred and slowed my transition to Bedford, but I am making up for it now!

Accompanying my preaching over the 33 years in Hipperholme, I wrote hymns (to old tunes) when there wasn't one appropriate to the message I was trying to convey. I had them made into a booklet printed locally last spring. I have already inflicted one or two on local congregations, so be warned!

Thank you for the welcome I have had since last summer in the churches I have already visited, and I look forward to more new congregations this coming year.

*Chris Robinson*

## David the Baker and David the Sea Scout *by Rev David Bown*

If I'm asked, "Who are you?", I'll invariably reply these days by saying "I'm a baker" or, "I'm David the Baker". And if I'm in the company of my grandchildren and we're talking in the same vein, I'm just as likely to say, "I'm a Sea Scout". Despite being a Methodist Minister for thirty-eight years, forty-two years if you include my college training, it's interesting that I refer back to days long past and dig out those old titles.

True, I was a baker and confectioner and that was my trade and profession; in fact, bread making, bun making, pastry making, cake making and cake decorating were second nature to me. I learnt the art, was taught the skills by my Master Baker father, watching the bakers from childhood and going through the City and Guilds apprenticeship courses. And as I say, it became second nature to me, maybe inherited genes. Even now, fifty years after that last full working day in the bakehouse, I can produce something very edible. It's the pride, the pride I have in our family bakery and all it stood for in the local neighbourhood, and the way that inheritance has stayed with me. That's why I'm still a baker.

My Scouting days began in the Cubs, and I moved up into the Sea Scouts at the usual age of 11. It was when at 14 I became a Patrol Leader that I began exercising responsibilities, especially to those in my care. But it was when I became a Troop Leader at 15 that my leadership skills seemed to take off, not only pretty well running the Scout Troop but by organising camps, expeditions, social events, various water activities especially kayaking, excursions to the annual Queen's Scouts' parades, and trips to the London Gang Shows. Organising all that hustle and bustle of energetic life onwards from the age of 15 taught me so much about leadership, a leadership that became the foundation from which the rest of my working life has profited.

Imagine arriving by coach at Windsor for the Queen's Scouts' Parade and suddenly being surrounded by the colourful exciting spectacle of

thousands of Scouts and then having to stay in the coach for a 15-minute Scouts' Own. A "Scouts' Own" is like a mini church service with a 'yarn' (mini sermon). In fact, whether at camp or any day out on a Sunday, you've got it, I conducted Scouts' Owns. The acceptance of these mini services by the Scouts themselves was, without doubt, my introduction to worship and preaching. The other big factor was the way my senses were awakened by the London Gang Shows, and not least the philosophical outlook, the convictions, values and merits embedded in what was called 'The Brotherhood of Scouting'. This launched me into a worldwide family of people with whom relationships were real and everything was adventurous. It was easy for me to equate all this with God's family and when the sky's the limit, it's not difficult to trace my future journey along the road to Methodist ministry.

Well that's me. David the Baker or David the Sea Scout, but why not David the Minister as well? The Baker and Sea Scout parts of me were distinctive roles gifted to me, and in the employment of them, they were character-building and set my sights on the horizon of life. A Methodist Minister accumulates various skills and non-expert specialisms; specialisms that he/she uses with lay and professional personnel alike, but at the end of the day, they see themselves doing everything within a team of like-minded people where all gifts are shared, and all are shared for the common good. That team is called the Body of Christ and the Minister, whilst fulfilling a vocational role, is in actuality someone alongside everyone else and in that sense, all are ministers one to another and to the people they serve.

Any credit that may be conferred upon me because of my ministerial work is owed entirely to my innovative baking and Sea Scouting days which were clearly my pride and joy, from which everything that has followed has been but a progression.

*Rev David Bown*

# **Kingdom People**

*By Rev David Bown*

*Wythenshawe. Manchester. A massive housing estate and five struggling Methodist churches.*

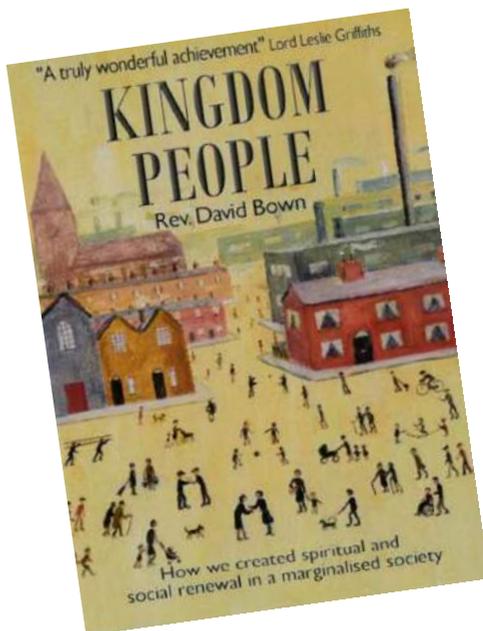
*David Bown was tasked with sorting them out, but instead of closing churches and rationalising the membership he embarked on an audacious plan of regeneration and renewal.*

*This strategy, based on the vibrancy and creativity of the local people, included tactical responses from street dance to alternative therapies, from rummage sales to community lunches.*

*This heart-warming book tells how these projects created a pathway to the Kingdom of God for the people of Wythenshawe.*

*Available in paperback from Amazon, Waterstones and all good bookshops.*

*Also available on Kindle from Amazon.*



*davidbown47@hotmail.co.uk*

## **Trinity Methodist Church Defibrillator Project**

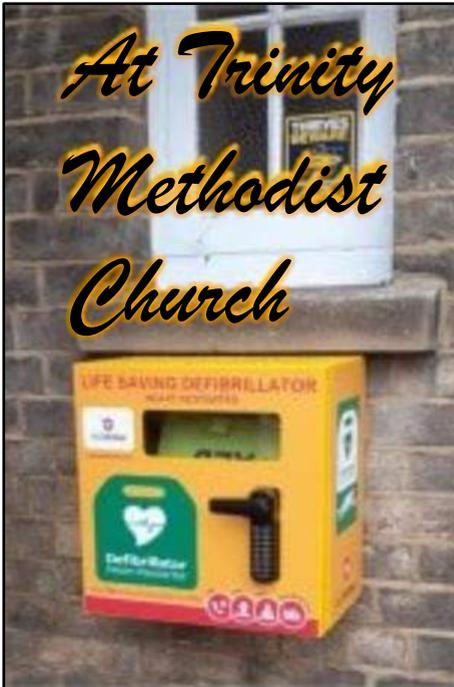
At the Trinity Methodist Church (TMC) Council meeting in February 2020, it was proposed that the Church Leadership Team look into the possibility of fitting a community accessible AED (Automated External Defibrillator) as an extension and continuation of the Church's mission role in serving the community and the user groups of the Church. An estimate was received which included a training package for 12 learners which would be offered to the different groups who use Trinity such as Cub Scouts, Guides, the two Brownie packs, Toddlers, three community choirs, BATS (Biggleswade Amateur Theatrical Society) and Biggleswade History Society. There are also our regular church activities such as weekly worship, monthly Thursday Lunch, weekly coffee mornings and Messy Church, and the intention was that their leaders would also be offered training in the operation of the device. It is estimated that well over 800 people passed through our church doors every week before COVID-19 restrictions, and it was noteworthy that as TMC is next to St Andrew's Lower School, a defibrillator could easily be accessed from there.

Our proposal demonstrated our concern for the community and fulfils our calling to offer service while acting as a good neighbour by providing essential equipment to help with specific medical needs. We are aware that sudden cardiac arrest can affect people of any age without any warning, and there is a need for more AEDs to be made available in easily accessible places and an increase in the number of people trained to use them. The nearest A&E is approximately 11.5 miles away and the closest ambulance station about 0.6 miles away.

The Church Leadership Team felt that the defibrillator needed to be on an external wall in an easily identified position at the rear of the church,

which would allow it to be available at all times.

TMC received permission for our proposal from The Methodist Church, and also notice that neither listed building consent nor planning consent were required from English Heritage, Historic England or the National Amenity Societies.



The next stage was to raise the funds, and we applied for and received donations from church members and the various organisations who use Trinity, and also a very generous grant from Biggleswade Town Council. The defibrillator was installed in October 2021, and in December we hosted a four-hour Defib & CPR training course for representatives of our church users.

The project went on for longer than we anticipated because of lockdowns, but the defibrillator is now available for use - although hopefully never needed. Why not consider proposing that your church adopt a similar scheme? Churches are at the centre of their communities and often in an ideal position for a defibrillator. If you require help with costs, why not approach your local councillors who have funds available to help with community projects such as this?

*Richard Pool*

Trinity Church Steward

# Shefford Methodist Church

*an update from Graham Scrase*

2021 was quite a year – as with every other church, we have been dogged by COVID-19 and all its restrictions, both those imposed by the Government and carefully considered local decisions made to correspond with the general convictions of our Stewards, Church Council and congregation.

All through the shut-down periods, we have maintained the church premises so that they remained clean, dry and ready for use at a moment's notice. A very comprehensive and professional risk assessment was conducted, and the mitigating measures fully accepted and adopted. Cleanliness and sanitising were at the top of the list. Other measures included regular ventilation and heating, which ensured that the air was not stale and that the buildings did not become damp and musty, flushing through the entire water supply to obviate the possibility of unwelcome bacteria, etc. lurking and festering, and regular cleaning.

When we re-opened, there was a whole raft of measures and equipment available to ensure as much as possible, the continued good health of our congregation and visitors – face masks, hand sanitisers, surface wipes, social distancing measures applied to the seating and toilets, labels to be left on seats and loos that had been used, “track-and trace” and the suspension of tea/coffee and other fellowship activities. Singing was obviously out of the question, but we managed to project recorded hymns, downloaded from YouTube and we encouraged people to remain seated and to join in the praise and worship music quietly in their heads. These measures have been slowly relaxed in recent months, but it is always left to each individual to make their own decision as to whether or not they sit or stand, sing or not, wear the mask when not moving around the building or remove it, and so on. This has always been at any one person's discretion bearing in mind the opinions and relative comfort of others present. We have also kept our services shorter than normal and this, at present, is beneficial in so many ways.

Ventilation during our time together has also been important, and it was pointed out that, as winter drew closer, the heating and the cold winter air were always going to fight for supremacy and so all were warned and have come suitably clad – our meeting together is evidently more important than a cool breeze – good news!

However, there are still some people who remain anxious about the whole situation and so stay away. This is quite understandable - even though we seem to be getting on top of it, there will always be a section of the community that will remain unsure. In time, we will all learn to live with COVID-19 as we have done with flu, heart disease, etc., and we will get on with our lives.

One of the highlights of this whole situation is that we have YouTube, the Internet, an incredible telephone network, Facebook, WhatsApp, etc. and Zoom – what would we do without Zoom? But even this excludes a proportion of our congregation who have no access to this remarkable tool. Once again, at Shefford, we have a strong, active and dedicated pastoral team and so no-one is totally isolated.

I could drone on about the effects of COVID-19 but, maybe, it's time to stop – you have all probably encountered the same restrictions and are nodding while you read this – and so I will stop.

The recent installation of screens has been particularly beneficial and has spurred us on towards upgrading a dated sound system, which has been added to and “tweaked” over the years, and we expect to have the new system installed during the coming year.

The vexed question of fixed pews versus moveable, stackable chairs still dogs us, but that is one of our ongoing discussions – the church section of our building is a superb space for activities beyond worship and, in time, this whole question may be settled as a matter of necessity.

We started a monthly coffee morning a few years ago as a fundraiser for the replacement of the roof of our main hall, which collapsed quite unexpectedly, and we decided to keep this event (the coffee morning, not the roof collapse) as a regular feature as it had become an important

social event for Shefford – we see people, who would not otherwise give us a second look, coming through the door – they all look forward to it and do not hold back because it looks too much like “CHURCH!” This is another bonus for the greater community. Unfortunately, coffee mornings were suspended during the “crisis” but have resumed in recent months. We have not yet considered making this a weekly event but, who knows? If this is the way forward, it may happen – it would represent a big increase in our members’ time and commitment.

Financially, we are keeping our heads above water – our major source of income has always been from the groups who hire the rooms behind the church for meetings, parties, etc. and, since they were unable to meet for the same reasons that we could not as a church, this source of income dried up for a while, even though the regular expenses and maintenance costs had still to be met.

On the “people” front, we have welcomed five new members, one or two of our Stewards have stepped down after years of sterling work (you don’t always know, or appreciate, the work that they do until it no longer happens) and others are stepping up to the mark. Once again, as is probably common to all our churches, people move on, young people disappear to university and may or may not return once they have qualified or get married and cannot afford to live in the area, and the older members move on to a much better place, where we will meet them again. This has the effect of causing the average age of our congregation to increase by about a year annually.

When all is said and done, we are Shefford Methodist Church and we continue to support the local community and each other; we have a wonderful Minister in Lorna and we will grow.

*Graham Scrase*

Steward, etc.

---

# The William Butterfield Trust

---

William Arthur Butterfield was a Bedford Methodist Local Preacher who died aged 92 on 22nd February 1959. He was born in Dunstable, the son of a labourer and lived at 6 Pembroke Street, Bedford. His estate amounted to £7,495 18s 6d. We know very little of William the man, other than that he worked all his life for the Bedford Barnard's Bank (later Westminster Bank and now NatWest), first, aged 14, as an errand boy and later as a bank servant and that, during his working life, he had been allotted Westminster Bank shares as part of an employee scheme. He was obviously well thought of by Mr Barnard, the owner of the bank, who in his will left William Butterfield a sum equivalent to a year's wages. My image of William is of a quiet, sober and conscientious man who lived a good honest Methodist life. He was married to Eleanor but they had no children of their own.

In his will, some modest sums were left to his nephew and nieces, and the residue, including his Westminster Bank shares, left in trust to the Bedford North Methodist Circuit for the capital and income to be used for the benefit of the churches therein. With remarkable foresight, the will included a clause extending this benefit to any other Circuit with which Bedford North might merge, thus including the churches now within the North Bedfordshire Circuit.

From these modest beginnings, the William Butterfield Trust has met a variety of needs in the Circuit by providing grants. The trustees meet as necessary to consider applications which might range from a major building project to a modest request for help towards a summer outreach project. The fund is carefully watched over by a stockbroker who advises on investments. Over the years the fund has been managed and diversified to produce a balance of income and capital growth. The

trustees do not have any special qualifications, but it helps to have an interest in the Stock Market!

Over the 60 years' life of the Trust, the Methodist landscape has evolved. In William's time, church and chapel were the hubs of the community, packed with worshippers on Sundays and supporting many social groups and meetings during the week. Churches needed funds to build extensions to accommodate their growing range of activities, and were keen to upgrade their buildings with new modern facilities. Over time it is true that congregations have diminished, but buildings and fabric still need upkeep. Churches that were newly built during William's lifetime or even after that are now starting to creak a bit! Others are still needing improvements and alterations.

Typical grants in the recent past have included contributions to various building works, costs of youth workers, manse improvements, wood rot treatments, youth projects and residential youth visits. Grants have also been extended to other bodies such as 'Friends for Life' and 'BELIEF' who have appealed for funds. All that is needed is a formal application to the trustees with some details of the project, the anticipated costs and how these might be met. The applications are considered at the discretion of the trustees in the light of the terms of the Trust. Application forms are available from Mike Bonney, the Trust Secretary (mbonney@hotmail.co.uk). The Trust has been able to respond quickly to emergencies when necessary.

William Butterfield would be pleased to know that his intentions are still being carried out – he might be amazed to see the works that have been achieved in his name and the good that his legacy has done. God bless him!

*Mike Bonney*



Methodist Women  
in Britain

*For women, for justice, for Christ*

## Methodist Women in Britain (MWiB) ~ an update ~

I would like to wish all Methodist Women in Britain a very Happy New Year and pray that you had a blessed Christmas.

I thought life would have returned to some normality by now, but we still have to be careful and hopefully by the time this is printed we may have had a meeting or at least have one planned.

The Advent Service held at Langford on 5th December was very successful and we had quite a good congregation. The title 'Gifts of Light' was presented by members of churches from around the Circuit and led by Rev Lorna Valentine. During our last carol the lights went out and we lit our tealights – everyone was given one on arrival and sparkly ones no less, and the Christmas tree lights gave a truly lovely glow inside and out. I felt we were truly blessed and it was a great start to Advent.

Also, the High Leigh Weekend should be happening 11th to 13th March, this being led by Anne Browse. The theme 'Kingfisher Moments - Glimpsing God' will encourage us to look out for and take notice of God's presence in the world.

We need encouragement, and I do pray that we will not give up on our faith or our ever-loving Father who never leaves us, so let us face 2022 with a firm conviction that all will be well.

In God we trust.

*Sheila Smith*

MWIB is a Registered Charity No: 1156626

---

# **LENT, HOLY WEEK AND EASTER SERVICES**

---

## **2nd March – Ash Wednesday**

There will be a **Circuit Service** for Ash Wednesday using Zoom at 7.00pm led by Rev Lorna Valentine. This will not be a traditional Ash Wednesday service, but instead a more informal service of music, prayer, sharing and reflection to mark the start of Lent. There will not be an in-person option for this particular service to enable those participating to share together more easily. Therefore, perhaps those with access to Zoom may feel able to invite a person who doesn't have access to join with them.

~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~

## **Rev Sarah Burrow – Anjulita Court**

### **2nd March – Ash Wednesday**

11.15am Eucharist with ashing

### **Holy Week**

2.00pm Lent series of prayer and reflection on Mondays  
(7th, 14th, 21st, 28th March and 4th April)

### **14th April – Maundy Thursday**

2.00pm Eucharist

### **15th April – Good Friday**

11.15am Service of Devotions

### **17th April – Easter Sunday**

11.15am Eucharist Service led by Rev Sarah Burrow.  
If unable to meet together, she will visit the  
different units during the day.

~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~

## **Rev Michael Giles' churches**

There will be an Easter Garden set up in front of **Kempston East** church from about two weeks before Easter and over the Easter period.

### **14th April – Maundy Thursday**

**KEMPSTON EAST** 7.30pm Holy Communion

### **15th April – Good Friday**

**KEMPSTON EAST** 7.30pm Good Friday Reflection



**LIDLINGTON** 10.00am Good Friday Personal Devotions  
(Chapel) - 4.00pm at the Cross

**17th April – Easter Sunday**

**LIDLINGTON** 6.15am Easter Sunday Dawn Service  
at the Graveyard, High Street, Lidlington

~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~

**Churches covered by Rev Lorna Valentine and Rev Silas Wood**

**15th April – Good Friday**

**BEESTON** 10.30am [ Walk of Witness - see **Sandy** ]

3.00pm Good Friday Service led by Rev Silas Wood

**SANDY** 10.30am Walk of Witness with BEESTON & CTiSB  
(Churches Together in Sandy and Beeston)

**TRINITY  
(BIGGLESWADE)** 10.45am Walk of Witness followed by service at 10.45am  
in the Market Square [ *details to be confirmed* ]

~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~

**Team of churches covered by**

**Rev Lorna Valentine and Rev Silas Wood**

**Holy Week**

Holy Week Services for all the churches covered by Rev Lorna Valentine and Rev Silas Wood have been co-ordinated to give a range of options for both in person and Zoom worship. Please feel free therefore to attend whatever service suits you, regardless of location. *Lorna and Silas*

**14th April – Maundy Thursday**

**ZOOM** 3.00pm led by Rev Silas Wood's Mission Group

**15th April – Good Friday**

**ZOOM** 9.30am a short Service of Reflection  
led by Rev Lorna Valentine

~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~ + ~

*The events listed above may be subject to hybrid arrangements as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Please check relevant information prior to planning attendance. See the Circuit Plan for details of other services on Easter Sunday.*



During the various COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns, Age UK Bedfordshire continued to provide all our services, but in a different way. Our whole staff and volunteer contingent were moved from

working in the office and face-to-face, to remote working from their home bases. Our telephone and email were manned as usual, and we continued to provide our practical services in and around the home.

We were proactive in ensuring that all our workforce who were providing home help, shopping, gardening and handyperson work were supplied with full PPE and associated procedures and guidelines relating not only to their use but also to social distancing measures and personal hygiene. We are very pleased to say that we have provided over 65,000 hours of help in and around the home during the last year. We have not contracted or been responsible for spreading any COVID-19 infection, which is thanks to our brilliant and committed workforce maintaining all procedures and guidelines for the benefit of our older clients.

We have provided *Telephone Befriending* to over 300 clients during the period. Some of these clients were people who paused their home help through fear of COVID-19, but we stayed in regular contact with them. They were all very pleased that this happened and enjoyed the interaction while waiting out the shielding period.

Our *Information and Advice Team* have continued to be there for all issues that older people have, from Blue Badges to Attendance Allowance and much more. They have continued to be there for everyone who needs us, by telephone, email, social media and FaceTime. We have procured over £1.25 million again in benefits for older people in Bedfordshire.

Another very important activity was providing emergency food and household goods for older people who were unable to buy things like toilet rolls. Basic goods and foods (toilet rolls, antibacterial soap and hand gel, milk, bread, soup, tea, coffee, biscuits, instant porridge and more) were delivered to over 200 older people.

We further continued to work in partnership with other organisations – with E.ON to provide and fit small insulation type materials such as letterbox strips, draught excluders, night lights, timer switches, remote control sockets, and low energy light bulbs. We also partnered with

Bedfordshire Police to work with a campaign on protecting older people from scams. We provided booklets and other information to try to help reduce the instances of scams in the older local population.

Some small highlights during the lockdown were the gentleman who rang us to say that his TV had crashed, and he had no other source of media or entertainment. We put a plea out through our Facebook page and a very kind couple from Cople donated a brilliant TV which we collected, sanitised, delivered, and set up for the gentleman. He was so pleased with the generosity and our actions.

We have had many telephone calls over the period from clients and families to thank us for continuing to provide things like home help and gardening. These everyday services are a lifeline to our clients and, to some extent, to their families, and the fact that we have been able to continue to safely provide them has been welcomed far and wide.

Our services:-

-  Information and advice with community support for more complex issues
-  Home help
-  Accompanied outings
-  Carers' respite service
-  Garden maintenance
-  Handyperson service including keysafes and grabrails
-  Telephone friendship network

All services can be reached via telephone number 01234 360510 or  
by email at [enquiries@ageukbedfordshire.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ageukbedfordshire.org.uk)

Also, please see our website [www.ageuk.org.uk/bedfordshire](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/bedfordshire)

## NORTH BEDFORDSHIRE CIRCUIT – OUR CHURCHES

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

# BELIEF Events 2022

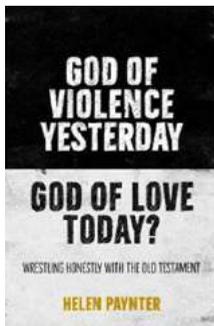
The planned *Reaching Out: Doing Mission Today* course has once again been postponed and details will be available when new dates are planned.



## Helen Paynter speaking about her book

**“God of Violence Yesterday, God of Love Today?”**

Saturday 19th March 10.00am to 12.00pm using Zoom  
(Bookings via Eventbrite [www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/belief-31312786847](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/belief-31312786847))



Helen Paynter is a Baptist Minister and Old Testament specialist. She works at Bristol Baptist College as biblical studies tutor and is the founding director of the Centre for the Study of Bible and Violence ([csbvbristol.org.uk](http://csbvbristol.org.uk)). She is the author of a number of books on biblical violence including *“God of Violence Yesterday, God of Love Today? : Wrestling honestly with the Old Testament”* and *“The Bible Doesn’t Tell Me So: Why you don’t have to submit to domestic abuse and coercive control”*.

**Luke Bretherton will offer some theological reflections on democracy,** with particular reference to his 2019 book *“Christ and the Common Life”*  
Wednesday 15th June at 7.00pm using Zoom (booking details tbc)

## Rev Stephen Heap speaks on

**“What is the role of the Church in fostering democracy”**

Saturday 2nd July 10.00am to 4.00pm (booking details tbc)

All events are hosted by

St Andrew’s Church Centre, Kimbolton Road, Bedford MK40 2PF

For more information and details of further events please visit our website

[www.beliefbeds.org](http://www.beliefbeds.org)

email [BELIEF@StAndrewsBedford.org](mailto:BELIEF@StAndrewsBedford.org)

BELIEF is registered as a charity, number 1123911

# News from the Worship Mission Stream

Although the Worship Mission Stream hasn't been meeting in the current circumstances, the work of worship very much continues to be at the heart of our calling as people of God. It is no surprise then that God continues to call people to lead others in worship and to preach. Please do reflect on whether this is something God has been calling you to or you have seen God equipping and gifting others in this ministry. Please do share with others if you see God's gift in them and please do approach your Minister, the training group, me as the Local Preachers' and Worship Leaders' (LPWL) meeting Chair or Rev Andrew Hollins as Superintendent if you want to think more about preaching and leading worship. Please remember too that worship is something we are all able to participate in and, even if you don't feel called to be a Local Preacher or Worship Leader, you may find yourself feeling able to lead prayers or share your own faith story. Local Worship is an ideal time to explore how each of us can contribute to the worshipping life of our local churches. The LPWL meeting continues to gather using Zoom, and we look forward to potentially meeting in person at some point during the warmer months to share in Holy Communion. Our usual pattern for meeting is October, January, April and July. May God continue to inspire and bless you in worship.

Every blessing,

*Rev Lorna Valentine*

*The Worship Mission Stream meet regularly throughout the year and all are welcome to join us, as we are all worshipping people*

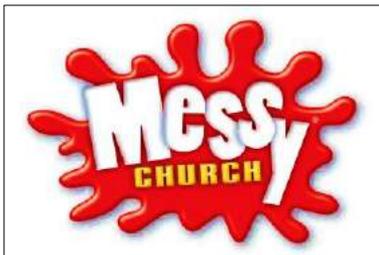
# Easter Story Trail

Step into the Bible

**Sandy** : The Easter Story Trail was developed ten years ago by the Bible Encounter Trust. It takes parties of schoolchildren back in time, to find the Upper Room and consider the Last Supper and the strange words Jesus used about his blood and body; to visit the Garden of Gethsemane (which always amazes); to see the Cross and to wonder at the empty tomb. A return to the Upper Room considers what has been seen and unravels the meaning of it all, and children (and grown-ups) leave with a real understanding of what Easter is about.

Since 2013, Churches Together in Sandy and Beeston have periodically staged it in Sandy Baptist Church and plan to do so again this year from the 14th to 25th March, with a dress rehearsal on the 12th March.

If you are interested in seeing it or would like to help as a storyteller, please get in touch with Jenny Endersby at [jennycor@aol.com](mailto:jennycor@aol.com)



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

## • Willington

Usually 3rd Wednesday of the month, 3.15 – 5.30pm

(except February which will be held on 23rd)

## • London Road, Bedford

Next Messy Church will be Saturday 26th March 11.00am to 1.00pm

London Road Bedford's Messy Nativity took place on Sunday 12th December and 48 attendees of all ages enjoyed an afternoon of activities and food – as well as praise and worship, naturally, as we looked forward excitedly to the birth of Jesus!

As mentioned above, our next Messy Church will be on Saturday 26th March.

# Circuit Diary Dates

FOR DETAILS OF OTHER EVENTS AROUND THE CIRCUIT PLEASE  
SEE THE CIRCUIT WEBSITE [www.northbedsmethodist.org.uk](http://www.northbedsmethodist.org.uk)

*The events listed below may be subject to hybrid  
arrangements as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.  
Please check relevant information prior to planning attendance.*

## FEBRUARY

- |            |                    |   |
|------------|--------------------|---|
| Thurs 10th | 7.30pm             | Circuit Meeting (using Zoom)  |
| Fri 11th   | 1.30pm<br>- 4.30pm | Creating Safer Space Foundation Training<br>at <b>Kempston East</b> |

## MARCH

- |                     |                     |   |
|---------------------|---------------------|---|
| Thurs 3rd           |                     | Circuit Leadership Team Meeting (using Zoom)  |
| Thurs 17th          |                     | Presbyteral Synod<br>at <b>St Andrew's Methodist Church, Harlow</b>   |
| Sat 19th & Sun 20th |                     | Visit of Vice-President of Conference, Barbara Easton, to<br>the Bedfordshire, Essex & Hertfordshire District |
| Tues 22nd           | 7.00pm<br>- 10.00pm | Creating Safer Space Foundation Training<br>at <b>Willington</b>  |

## APRIL

- |            |        |   |
|------------|--------|---|
| Thurs 28th | 7.30pm | Local Preachers' and Worship Leaders' Meeting<br>[ venue / format to be confirmed ] |
|------------|--------|---|

## MAY

- |           |         |  |
|-----------|---------|--|
| Wed 4th   | 7.00pm  | Churches Together in Bedfordshire<br>Annual Forum and AGM using Zoom   |
| Sat 7th   | 10.00am | District Synod Representative Session<br>at <b>Marlborough Road Methodist Church,<br/>Marlborough Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL1 3XG</b> |
| Tues 24th | 9.30am  | Mission Resources Mission Stream meeting (using Zoom)  |

**Churches** should send their dates for the next Plan (with details of preachers they have booked) to **their Minister** by **Sunday 13th March**

**Preachers** should enter their availability on Chrestos by **Sunday 13th March**

All **Articles** for the next edition of the Circuit Magazine to a member of the editorial team no later than **Sunday 3rd April** please

The **Circuit Office** remains closed.

The Circuit Administrator (Stephanie Field) and Finance Officer (Anne Ainley) are both working from home. They can be contacted using the Circuit mobile phone - 07522 928936.

Please email or scan information wherever possible. If mail has to be posted, please send Anne's to her home address, and Stephanie's c/o the Superintendent Minister. (Addresses are in the Circuit Directory).

Circuit Administrator email address –

*northbedscircuitoffice@gmail.com*

Circuit Finance Officer email address –

*northbedsfinance@gmail.com*

*As before, there will unfortunately not be an audio version of this magazine produced on CD.*

*We apologise for any inconvenience that this causes.*

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](http://www.northbedsmethodist.org.uk)  
Circuit Charity Registration No. 1129523