

Magazine

34/1

Issue No.44

Summer 2022

**From the rising of the sun to the
place where it sets,**

the name of the Lord is to be praised.

Psalm 113:3 NIV

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

- Sun 24th July – Farewell Service for Rev Andrew Hollins at Priory
- Wed 31st August – Service to welcome Rev Leslie Noon and to mark Rev Michael Giles becoming NBM Circuit Superintendent.

For diary dates, see page 31

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 Silas Wood

Dear Friends,

Sometimes when I listen to music I choose a specific artist or album. On other occasions I just select 'shuffle' and enjoy the randomness of whatever comes up. It was one of these days yesterday as I searched for inspiration for writing this - and it came in an unexpected form. There is a singer/songwriter whose album I haven't listened to in quite a while now, and iTunes decided I needed to hear them again. The selected track was '*Don't Say I Didn't Warn Ya*' by Gentle Ben & The Rising Tide. They aren't a Christian artist, but they definitely have lyrics with a message. This song opens with the words –

*'Only God can judge me,
but I know She'd rather love me,
kiss my scars and dry my tears
and hold my hand when things get ugly'*

It's a song about being judged by others and the hurt it can cause. We live in a world where there is so much judgement and blame causing too much hurt. But these lyrics remind us that this isn't God's way. We have a God who loves us, who cares for and about us, who holds us in the dark times and celebrates with us in the good times.

The song goes on to remind us that we should

*'Be sure to wipe your own hands clean
before you judge another brother
with the lies that you believe'*

It is so easy to judge, to point the finger of blame, to discriminate, to accuse, other people - especially if they are different in some way from ourselves. But the Bible reminds us that God is the God of all creation, and everyone is loved by God, regardless of whether they are 'like us' or not. We shouldn't blame or judge anyone, especially not by our own standards. When Jesus challenged the crowds that were accusing a woman of adultery, He told them that the ones who were without sin, those who were blameless, should throw the first stone at her. Not one could - they all walked away. None of us is 'without sin' (John 8:7) but we are still loved by God. As the song says at the end -

*'Forgive them, they know not what they do,
You are forgiven, just let your light shine through.'*

So let us all try to not judge others - we'll leave that to God - but to love and care, support and encourage, all those we meet, letting the love of God shine through.

Rev Silas Wood.

THOUGHTS FROM A VISITING PREACHER – BOB HELEY

Hello, my name is Bob Heley and I have been a visiting preacher for quite a few years now. I spent my early years attending my local Anglican church in Stewkley which was in the Diocese of Oxford. I attended Sunday School each week, began in the church choir when I was seven and gradually grew into the life of the church. When I left school I went to a Church of England teacher training college near Abingdon. I became involved with the local churches and joined the choir in one of them. I also became involved in bell-ringing at the local churches before services and was able to use this skill when I returned to my own church in the holiday times. One of my tutors was a Lay Reader and I had many conversations with him about this role. I left college and began teaching in a local primary school. I moved to a village school which was a Church of England school and became involved with the church there. I then got married and moved into the village and gradually became very involved in the church as Churchwarden and encouraging children from the school to join the church choir.

This was a great success, and as I got more involved with the church, my then incumbent encouraged me to train as a Lay Reader as it was then. I applied to the Diocese of Oxford and was accepted for training in 1983. Our parish was one of three, and as part of my training I was able to start to take services to help out.

My training was interesting as I followed the Central Readers' Training Course as it was then. I had to complete three essays a year and had a personal tutor based at Willen Priory. I met others in training and it was a very fruitful experience. As well as the essays, we had to keep a record of all the work we did within our parishes.

I successfully finished my training in 1986 and started a probationary year before I could be licensed as a Lay Reader. By then I had moved to Bedfordshire and become a member of All Saints Wilstead. In September of 1987 I was licensed at St Mark's Church.

It was not long after that when Rev John Tibbs, who was the vicar of Elstow and also Chaplain at the hospital, asked me if I would like to join the team who conducted services for the patients at the hospital on Sunday mornings. I duly joined the team, and on the third Sunday of each month I took the service for the patients who were brought to the chapel by volunteers or nurses. This went well and after a few years I was asked if I would like to join the visiting preachers list for the Methodist Circuit in the late 90s.

Those were the days when most Methodist churches had evening services. I could continue helping out at Wilstead and Houghton Conquest in the morning and then go to a Methodist church in the evening. I went to many in the Circuit as it was then, taking services at Flitwick, Maulden, Houghton Conquest, Wilstead, Marston Bedford Road, Marston Shelton, Cardington, Cranfield, Haynes, London Road, Kempston East and Willington.

Sadly now many of those have closed or don't have an evening service. I was always made welcome at the churches. Now I only tend to go to London Road or Haynes and have started to attend Haynes on a regular basis whether I am taking the service or not. I enjoy the style of worship, as it makes a change from our more fixed services in the Anglican Church.

When I set out on my journey as a Lay Reader in 1987, little did I know where it would lead me. I thank God for every road He has led me on. May it long continue.

Bob Heley

A Love of Gardening

by Roger Skipper

Many of you reading this will remember me either as being a member of Kempston East, or a church Circuit Meeting representative or as a retired Bedfordshire Police Officer. I have loved every aspect of gardening for almost all of my 79 years. Probably before I was six years old I had a small plot of ground in my father's garden at the back of our terraced house in Norfolk and was always with him in what was quite a large garden, plus on his allotment, helping him with digging, hoeing, sowing seeds and plants. I remember my father telling people that I was always setting and growing plants, digging them up, moving them around, and they always seemed to survive. I also spent many hours with my grandad on his allotment, so in reality I had quite a wealth of practical experience given to me by my family which I thank them for, but I should say that I have no formal horticultural qualifications. I also remember being deeply involved in our village primary school garden, growing vegetables and looking after the front border inside the railings by the footpath. I clearly recall the Harvest Festivals at our village Methodist church which all of the family attended, especially the Monday evening after, when the bounteous harvest of fruit and vegetables was auctioned off. Even in my teenage years and at secondary school I still continued to help with all the practical gardening work and remember vividly being taken to the potting shed and soil sterilising house and shown how this was achieved before the soil was used for potting up seeds and plants.

When I was 17, I joined the then Bedfordshire Constabulary as a Cadet and as a Constable a year or so later, living in Bedford. Even before I married my wife Anna I had an allotment in Clapham – so what with pounding the beat, gardening and courting, life was quite busy. Fortunately for me Anna came from a farming background, so she was quite sympathetic and loved getting her hands dirty as well. For all of our 58 years of married life and the several addresses we have lived in, our garden has always been an

important aspect of our Christian lives. The most memorable of our gardens was at Wootton Green. We moved in 1980 and lived there for 40 and a bit years, and one of the main reasons for the move was the potential for making a lovely garden. Many of you may well remember visiting this garden in the later years. The garden with a slight rise was almost an acre in size. It was a challenge from the start, as it was more or less totally covered in field grass with a few sapling trees. The soil was neutral and also very heavy clay, with pure clay less than 12 inches below the surface. Stewartby brickworks were just over a mile away as the 'crow flies'. An old 'ride on' mower came with the property, so keeping the grass controlled for the first few years was a priority, but even keeping grass trimmed relatively short on heavy ground created a few problems. When the grass dried out in hot summers huge splits opened up making it quite dangerous to walk on the grass. The solution was relatively simple – leave the grass longer, retaining a little more moisture and much less splitting. We loved all aspects of gardening: trees, shrubs, flowers, bulbs and vegetables, so in reality we had a blank canvas. With a growing family, vegetables were a priority, so initially approximately a third of the garden was turned into a vegetable plot, enabling the family to be more or less self-sufficient through the seasons for several years. As the youngsters moved away from home, vegetables became less of a priority, so large areas of the vegetable plot were turned into flower beds with trees, conifers, shrubs and many different species of perennial flowers. We also created a large lined pond in a lower and wetter part of the garden, where we had the benefit of lots of pond wildlife, fish and pond flowers and weeds. Over several more years, many more flower beds were created all over the garden, thus significantly reducing the previous grassed areas. By the time the garden was more or less finished, we had over 50 different species and varieties of trees, dozens of different species of conifers, shrubs, perennials and bulbs. One of my favourite flowers was the Penstemon,

and from small beginnings I had a collection of over 150 species and different varieties of this beautiful flower. My reputation for the cultivation of Penstemons became well known over many parts of the east of England and I was constantly asked to provide talks on the subject to lots of gardening clubs all over the region. The talks also expanded into several more gardening-type topics. However, at the end of 2015 I decided to ease up doing the talks as it was taking up too much of our valuable life. In the early 2000s we had requests from gardening clubs to visit our garden and in 2004 we were requested to open the garden for the National Garden Scheme and were visited by their then local organiser – Chris Izzard. He approved of our garden, and for the next 11 years we had many hundreds of people visiting the garden, but we were only able to achieve this with help on the opening days from our church and family friends. In 2016 we withdrew from the National Garden Scheme and also stopped opening it up to garden clubs, basically because we felt we had set ourselves a high standard, and possibly because we were getting older, and definitely because of wanting to spend time with our grandchildren and also family circumstances. Almost all of our time for much of the 40 years in the spring, summer and autumn months was spent in the garden. We absolutely loved being in God’s creation and could not have achieved what we had without Him. We moved into our Wootton retirement property in January 2021. We still have a little garden with a vegetable plot, flower garden and greenhouse, so we can still get our hands dirty and enjoy our pastime, but on a much smaller scale, and we can do what we want and when we feel like it. We are both members of the Bedfordshire Police Gardening Club and I have been the Chairman for over 30 years. We have visited hundreds of beautiful gardens all over the country in our lifetime and hope to do so for many years to come.

Thank you God for your creations.

Roger Skipper - Kempston East

LONDON ROAD METHODIST CHURCH, BEDFORD

o o o o REVISITED o o o o

Like most other churches in the last few years, London Road has seen challenges and changes, and opportunities too. Afternoon services have continued to be popular and mostly alternate with morning worship week to week. In recognition of different learning styles, occasional afternoon 40/20 services take place. These give individuals in the congregation a choice of activities. If you feel you learn better through doing something practical, there are practical activities available for all ages based on the theme. If you prefer to listen to a sermon in traditional form, the opportunity is there to do this, or you may choose to go into the hall to discuss with others during this time. When we come together after the sermon it is always good to hear from each other what we have learnt.

The first in-person Messy Church since lockdown took place earlier in the year. Activity bags were delivered to members of the Messy Church congregation when we were unable to meet together. Although hard work, and only meeting once a quarter, it is a joy to see people of all ages worshipping and having fun together.

The relationship with our nearby Anglican church continues to grow, particularly through Monthly Gathering, a study group where all are welcome and both churches are represented. The evening usually begins with a meal before a film clip or study of some sort. The recent formation of a Monthly Gathering WhatsApp group means members can keep in touch and support and encourage each other.

Worship can of course take many forms, and the tablecloths come out every month for Café Worship. The usual elements of worship are always there in some form, but this has also included plenty of interaction

with drama, games, quizzes, craft activities, and at times challenging discussion. A recent feedback questionnaire gave some encouraging responses and ideas to consider for those planning. One comment recommended “Less tempting treats”. We will get more fruit next time, but I will stick with the doughnuts!

Andrew Constant



HENLOW METHODIST CHURCH

o o o o REVISITED o o o o

Like many others, we in Henlow try to follow A Methodist Way of Life, namely Worship, Learning and Caring, Service and Evangelism. Sometimes this is easier than others as we all discovered during the constraints imposed by the Coronavirus.

Worshipping with others involved a dependence on technology (we learnt a new meaning for the word Zoom) but many of us relied on published Worship at Home Services, radio and television. Daily prayers probably increased. The encouraging thing was that when we were again able to meet in a sanitised church with our faces covered, the numbers attending each Sunday actually went up. Hallelujah!

We tried to take care of ourselves by following Government guidelines regarding hand washing and social distancing, but also to care for others – shopping, transporting, regular phone calls (and emails).

Before lockdown, about ten people from the local Methodist and Anglican churches met as a house group from time to time to study the Scriptures and learn more about our faith. That had to be suspended for

a couple of years, but we began again, meeting this time in the Methodist church hall which provided safer surroundings. We met in Advent and then again in Lent, the latter attracting about 16 people from several different churches. We plan to continue meeting.

When circumstances permit, we hold a monthly Coffee Morning hosted by different people, with any profits going to the hosts' nominated charity. We also have a monthly midweek Coffee Hour with social chat and a half hour or so of Reflections. On alternate months we have a two-course Community Lunch aimed primarily, but not exclusively, at people living alone. The inspiration behind each of these is our Senior Steward, Brenda Ballantine.

With a small congregation we have limited resources, but we try to use these sensitively, seeking a balance between our own needs and those of others. We are conscious of the world situation, of course, so we try to respond to the care of the planet and the plight of those affected by war, drought and natural disasters. Prayer is a powerful tool!

It is not given to many of us to preach openly, but we can show the love of God by the way we lead our lives and the way we interact with our family, friends and neighbours. As the prophet Micah said: 'What does the Lord require of you? To act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.' *Micah 6:8 NIV*

In future we want to continue with all the positive things that we have learnt from each other – caring, serving, studying, supporting – to follow Christ's example where we can. All our hope on God is founded.

Alan Painter
Church Secretary

>>> NEWS FROM CHURCHES <<<

HOWARD MEMORIAL CHURCH, CARDINGTON

Recently we welcomed three new young adults into membership, which was fantastic. The church was full and we had refreshments afterwards, which gave everyone time to chat. People had travelled many miles to celebrate with these young people and encourage them on their journey of faith.

Our Friday clubs are now beginning to take off again after closure during the pandemic, and the children enjoy crafts and cooking and a 'message'. It's great to see numbers returning to normal now. The older group recently enjoyed a very informative visit to Bedford School Observatory.

We are planning a Holiday Club – JUBILEE JOY! This will be held at Howard Memorial Church from Monday 15th to Friday 19th August from 6.30pm – 8.30pm.

Our Sunday evening services are still hybrid, which means those who are older and not able to get out can still take part using Zoom. This also gives time for them to have a chat with those in the building after the service.

Janet Oliver



UPPER CALDECOTE METHODIST CHURCH

Upper Caldecote Methodist Church recently prepared and handed out over 30 Easter 'Goody bags' from outside the church at the end of term to the village lower school age children. These contained art and craft activities, crosswords, colour by numbers, a wall chart with a picture to colour in each day from Palm Sunday to Easter Day, a sticker scene, an Easter message from Rev Lorna Valentine, a palm cross and of course, a chocolate egg!! These have been well received, and it is a good outreach into the local community.

Sandra and Jon Payne

During my career as a Human Resources manager, I developed skills in leading and developing others – usually as managers of people. In my church life I realised I could also begin to do that, and that there was a need to develop and enhance local worship. I was often called upon to lead prayers and that gave me the starting point for my journey as a Worship Leader.

We are fortunate to have a group of people within Oakley Methodist Church (my local church) with gifts and skills in this area, and who encouraged me to take up the opportunity for further study.

At the beginning I had only very limited experience of taking part in leading worship – either doing Bible readings or occasionally leading intercessory prayers. I was keen to develop my faith and learn more about other elements of worship, and how I could contribute to those.

It was great to discover that the Methodist Church offers opportunity and encouragement through the worship leading course. I did not have to commit to being a Local Preacher, which I did not feel ready for, but this seemed like a way to develop my skills in a constructive way. The course gave me the motivation and opportunity to take a more leading role in the service and to plan a more rounded and whole worship experience. Whilst I was used to standing up in front of people, I was surprisingly nervous standing up and talking about my faith. However, I learned a lot about how to plan and prepare worship, how to ensure appropriate hymns and readings are chosen and, if planned well, how this can really enhance the worship experience.

During the course, I enjoyed learning some of the basics of Methodism. These included the ‘Four Alls’...*All need to be saved. All can be saved. All can know that they are saved. All can be saved to the uttermost.* That is very empowering and good to remember as a key foundation of our beliefs.

The concept of the Methodist quadrilateral – using Scripture, tradition, reason and experience as a way of approaching theology – resonated with me. There was room for discussion and debate, and I realised I had missed having opportunities for discussion with like-minded Christians.

The study sessions were very enjoyable, and being able to look at the Bible and hymns with a critical eye was very rewarding. I have learned to use different versions of the Bible to help throw light on certain things, and also to look at commentaries – though I do need to expand my selection of these. I also realised how much I don’t know, and that is quite scary at times. I have even more respect for our Ministers and Local Preachers who prepare services every week. Taking time to plan every element of the service was essential, and I realised how much time and research goes into each service. I had to learn to manage the time – initial services were a bit short – and also to make sure that the service was coherent and made sense as a whole. The feedback was very positive, especially about my ability to speak out in front of people, and this has given me confidence to continue in this role.

The studying of the material in the modules was enlightening, although the main thing I realised was that there are no easy answers to questions such as ‘Why is there suffering in the world?’ The course material prompted deeper thinking, whilst not necessarily giving ‘the answer’. It

was helpful to read some sections from the course reader, which gave some perspectives on thorny issues, but it is also important to develop your own approach to issues, and as your own understanding deepens, it becomes easier to share that with others.

I am aware that my knowledge of the Bible is not very great, and that I need to spend more time engaging with the biblical texts and commentaries. This is a challenge for me, as it not something that comes naturally. I tend to need a focus or reason, and leading a service, or part of it, helps me to do that.

Leading prayers is a key part of leading worship and I have always subscribed to the view that language in prayer is important, and that it is appropriate to speak of a prayer being beautiful, if beauty brings a deep resonance, a sense of completeness, a feeling of satisfaction or of wholeness, for these are the emotions an appropriate intercession should evoke.

I now look for wider sources for prayers, the Methodist Prayer Handbook, for example, and actively seek out different types of prayer. I will also pay closer attention to the language used – what it is saying about gender, subservience and our relationship with God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Of course, completing some study is only part of the journey. It was good to have revisited the basics of my faith and developed a deeper understanding of theology in practice. I had opportunities to learn new things and try out new experiences. I have had challenges, and with God's help, worked through them. I have also found real joy in exploring my faith and rediscovering the continuing love of God.

As a Worship Leader, I have a responsibility for planning and leading part or all of worship services when required – and this is likely to be two or three times a quarter. The worship is usually in my own church, but can also be across the Mission Group. I continue to feel a sense of call to lead worship as part of my response to putting my faith into action. It is important to use the gifts God has given us, and working through the course has strengthened my commitment to develop my abilities as much as I can. I have enjoyed learning – about God, the Bible and myself – and I hope to be able to continue to do that over the coming years.

Jane McVey

Becoming a Worship Leader

by Jeanette Letch

Write a little about yourself, the invite said. Not too keen on that. Like a lot of people, I prefer to keep in the background, stepping in where necessary. As far as the church is concerned, I'd always helped out with the practical things, and left the religious side to others. Only I also have another problem...I have a bad habit of volunteering.

It started out quite innocently. We decided to send our children to Junior Church, and because I felt a bit guilty dumping them on other people, I volunteered to be a Junior Church helper. Doing this, I learnt quite a bit about the Bible, and wrangling children. Eventually Junior Church ended due to lack of attendees, and because I was still fit and able, I sort of

volunteered to be a Steward. It was Rev Karen Murphy who persuaded me into that, so that will give you an idea of how long ago it was.

A few years later, and I was persuaded to be Senior Steward. I managed teams of people at work, so it was just another team to manage really. But I didn't do the religious bit of it. Then we got a church computer, and projector, and since I was working as an IT consultant and manager, I joined the presentation team. Sadly, one thing led to another, and I joined our Worship Group, so that I would have a better idea of what was planned in the services, to improve the presentation.

Then we started Messy Church at Oakley. I enjoy crafts, had been a leader in Junior Church, so why not help out? And then Wixams Messy Church was desperate for helpers, with 70-odd children and few helpers. I was retired by now, so I could help out once a month. And then London Road needed some help at their Youth Club, and their Messy Church. And then since I was doing so many Messy Church things, it was only sensible to help out with Clapham's Holiday Club. After all, I enjoyed crafts, and it was only for two weeks in the summer.

When I found myself helping to plan two services, and two Messy Church sessions, all in the course of a week, I realised that Someone was pushing me in a certain direction. So I finally gave in and did the worship leading course. I did find this interesting and useful, and I was able to use work I'd done on at least three Messy Church sessions in my portfolio. So here I am now, a somewhat reluctant Worship Leader, with a slightly different use of my skills. I wonder what I'll end up doing next. (Note to self – must stop volunteering).

Jeanette Letch

We have, at last, had a meeting of our area at Ampthill Methodist Church. As it was a very, very windy day we had only six attend, but we were able to discuss the future.

It was decided to keep going and pray that things would improve as we returned to some kind of normality.

Jenny Broadbridge was approached to be our President which she has accepted, asking that we all assist where possible. Linda Pitts has agreed to carry on as Treasurer and Sheila Smith as Secretary, so we are up and running in that way. Our next meeting is planned for 10.45am on Monday 12th September at Ampthill Methodist Church, so save the date.

We had planned a coach to take us to Daffodil Day but unfortunately not enough people came forward, so it was cancelled. I do pray that next year people will feel differently about travel, and I do understand that we are all two years older since our last visit, but we are dropped off outside Methodist Central Hall Westminster and collected from there, so not a lot of walking, and it is such an uplifting day. I understand that it was very well attended and there was a brass band from up north who gave their time for free and just asked for the coach fare down.

The High Leigh weekend was a great success. This was led by Anne Browse, and entitled 'Kingfisher Moments, Glimpsing God'. We had a wonderful weekend and it was so good to catch up with other members of our District whom we hadn't seen for a long time. The singing is just wonderful - I think they could make a super choir.

Our Easter Offering Service will be held at 4.00pm on Sunday 12th June at Priory Methodist Church in Bedford, followed by refreshments. This year we are looking at women who are sometimes forgotten or overlooked. It should be a good service, so please try to attend, and it should be a good opportunity to get to know each other better.

I may have mentioned before that the charity MWiB are supporting this year is the Queen Victoria Seamen's Rest. We held a Coffee Morning on Wednesday 27th April and raised £106. Again this was not very well attended, but we were really pleased with the result and thanks to those who attended. I do think we need to shake ourselves out of the COVID-19 situation and begin living again, so we pray that when we have another fundraiser more will attend.

Look forward to seeing you at the Easter Offering Service.

With Blessings

Sheila Smith

MWiB is a Registered Charity No: 1156626



Tibbs Dementia Foundation



If you or a loved one is affected by dementia and you live in Bedfordshire, we'd love to hear from you and welcome you into our community.

We understand that life with dementia can be a challenging and at times isolating experience, so we offer a wide range of services and activities to enable people to continue enjoying an active social life and meaningful activities with access to relevant information and support.

Tibbs Dementia Foundation is a local charity taking a community approach. We work with volunteers and people who use our services to build a broad range of services and activities so that people can continue to feel valued and involved throughout their dementia journey.

We've been mainly working in the Bedford and Ivel Valley areas, especially Potton, but our services have now been commissioned to extend and develop across Central Bedfordshire. Over the coming weeks and months, we're excited to have the opportunity to work with people from across the whole of Bedfordshire to start building services and activities that reflect the needs of the local community.

Our services and activities currently include our popular Music 4 Memory groups, physical activities such as walking groups, yoga, an allotment, walking football and indoor bowls, informal social groups, and a range of focused groups to directly support the cognitive health of the person with dementia. We also facilitate carers' groups to support the mental wellbeing of family carers and information sessions to help people affected by dementia deepen their understanding and share experience.

We are a grassroots community supported by a team of talented, dedicated and experienced staff and volunteers and driven by the needs and ideas of people living with dementia and their family supporters. We are always looking for volunteers who are keen to offer their skills and time to help us to continue and develop our work, so please get in touch for a friendly chat to discuss how you can get involved.

We know that life with dementia can be a challenge, but we also know that if we work together people can continue live well and enjoy a meaningful and connected life as part of our friendly and dynamic community.

Come and join us, phone or email and we can arrange a to have an informal chat and welcome you to the Tibbs community.

Website: www.tibbsdementia.co.uk

Email: contact@tibbsdementia.co.uk

Phone: 01234 210993

Tibbs Dementia Foundation is a Registered Charity, No. 1166596

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TIBBS DEMENTIA FOUNDATION AT KEMPSTON EAST

Following a visit to the Guild by Sarah Russell and enabled by the provision of a grant from the Ibbett Trust, Kempston East embarked on a partnership with Tibbs to provide a drop-in centre on Tuesday afternoons for people with dementia and their carers. This friendly and informal drop-in began in 2015, staffed by a Tibbs team and a rota of interested Kempston East volunteers. The time spent together encompasses a range of activities including the opportunity to chat whilst enjoying a cup of tea, joining in with quizzes, lively games, tabletop games and crafts, singing, dancing and lots of fun and laughter. Experienced Tibbs facilitators are readily available to provide information about dementia and give emotional support.

CARERS TOGETHER

a twice-monthly group for carers in Sharnbrook

The group provides an informal opportunity for those who are looking after someone with dementia, or some other condition, to meet with other carers and share experiences in a safe space. It started a few years ago as the church communities recognised the increasing number of families caring for people with dementia, and it is now restarting after COVID-19.

Carers are welcome to come with or without the person they care for. We begin the afternoon with tea and cakes together. Then while you chat with other carers, the person you care for will be able to enjoy a variety of activities from jigsaws to indoor bowls with our volunteer helpers. Alternatively, you may want to join in the activities together.

There is also the opportunity to speak privately in a separate room if you wish. We will endeavour to provide useful information and follow up any queries that might help you as you care for the person you love. We are supported by the Tibbs Dementia Foundation, a local charity with a lot of experience and resources (see above).

CARERS TOGETHER is hosted by Churches Together and meets in the Methodist Church, Park Lane, Sharnbrook, on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month from 2.30pm – 4.00pm starting on May 10th.

If you would like any further information, please contact Linda Hoar on 07791214148, email lindahoar@hotmail.co.uk or **just turn up**.

We will be delighted to see you.

NORTH BEDFORDSHIRE CIRCUIT – OUR CHURCHES

Amphill -----	Dunstable Street, corner Chandos Road, Amphill	MK45 2JS
Anjulita Court -----	Bramley Way, Bedford (access from Tyne Crescent)	MK41 7GD
Beeston -----	The Baulk, Beeston, Sandy	SG19 1NR
Trinity, Biggleswade --	Shortmead Street (near Trinity Close), Biggleswade	SG18 0AP
Cardington -----	Cople Road, Cardington	MK44 3SH
Clapham -----	27 High Street, Clapham, Bedford	MK41 6EQ
Clophill -----	High Street, opposite The Causeway, Clophill, Bedford	MK45 4BE
Cranfield -----	High Street, Cranfield	MK43 0DP
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 -----	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 -----	Amphill Road, Shefford	SG17 5BD
Stewartby -----	Park Crescent, Stewartby	MK43 9NL
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

THE QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE



On 9th September 2015, Her Majesty The Queen became the longest-reigning British monarch when she surpassed the reign of her great-great-grandmother Victoria.

The following words are taken from the Royal website by permission, with the content modified solely to fit into this magazine.

Royal Jubilees are an occasion to celebrate the life and reign of a monarch and are significant events which are celebrated around the world. Though the concept of the jubilee began in biblical times, today the term is most closely associated with the Royal Family, and the ceremony and spectacle which the term symbolises.

RELIGIOUS ORIGINS

In the Old Testament, a jubilee was marked every seven years. Initially jubilees simply provided a practical structure for land management as every seventh year, land was left to lie fallow. Over time though, jubilees took on a greater significance, with the belief that the jubilee year was a special one when God would be particularly bountiful. Jesus described himself as having come to “preach the year of the Lord's favour” (*Isaiah 61: 1-2*) in jubilee year.

In the Roman Catholic Church, jubilees began to be celebrated formally in 1300 AD and were seen as years of forgiveness of sins and reconciliation. Today, they are celebrated every 25 years. The most recent year of jubilee was 2000.

THE QUEEN'S JUBILEES AND OTHER MILESTONES

The Queen's reign has been punctuated by an unprecedented series of milestones. Her Majesty's jubilees and birthdays have provided cause for celebration and reflection throughout the remarkable years since her Accession. Such events help reinforce the Sovereign's role as a focus for national identity and unity as people across the Commonwealth come together to mark an important occasion for their Head of State.

THE PLATINUM JUBILEE : 2022

On 6th February this year, Her Majesty The Queen became the first British Monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee, marking 70 years of service to the people of the United Kingdom, the Realms and the Commonwealth.

To celebrate this unprecedented anniversary, events and initiatives will take place throughout the year, culminating in a four-day UK bank holiday weekend from Thursday 2nd to Sunday 5th June.



The four days of celebrations will provide an opportunity for communities and people throughout the United Kingdom to come together to celebrate the historic milestone, and will include public events and community activities, as well as national moments of reflection on The Queen's 70 years of service.

DEDICATION

On 6th May, a press release was issued, containing 70 facts to mark The Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Two of them read as follows:

- No.13 Her Majesty is a committed Christian and Churchgoer and has often spoken of her faith in her speeches and broadcasts. "For me, the life of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, whose birth we celebrate today, is an inspiration and an anchor in my life," she said in her 2014 Christmas Broadcast. "A role model of reconciliation and forgiveness, he stretched out his hands in love, acceptance and healing. Christ's example has taught me to seek to respect and value all people of whatever faith or none."
- No.51. On the evening of the Coronation, The Queen made a radio broadcast in which she stated: "Throughout all my life and with all my heart I shall strive to be worthy of your trust".

To read more about Her Majesty The Queen, other members of the Royal Family, the history of Royal Jubilees etc., please see the Royal website www.royal.uk

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.

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Luke Bretherton : “Christ, Democracy, and the Struggle for a Common Life”

During the session, Luke will use key Christian ideas, including love, lament and listening, to unpack how, through doing politics in a democratic way, we can help sustain a generous and just common life in days when societies can be divided and polarised. These are important matters in the world today. Please do come along and engage with them and with Luke, in this session.

Luke Bretherton is Robert E. Cushman Distinguished Professor of Moral and Political Theology and Senior Fellow of the Kenan Institute for Ethics at Duke University, USA. Before joining Duke in 2012, he taught at King's College London. His latest book is Christ and the Common Life: Political Theology and the Case for Democracy (2019). His other books include Resurrecting Democracy (2015), which was based on a study of community organizing; Christianity & Contemporary Politics (2010); and Hospitality as Holiness (2006), about pluralism. He is actively involved in grassroots democratic politics.

Wednesday 15th June at 7.30pm using Zoom. £10 per person. Booking via Eventbrite using this link <<< LINK REMOVED >>>

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Rev Stephen Heap : “Democracy: some Christian perspectives”

Not long ago it seemed democracy, specifically the sort of liberal democracy we have in the UK, was triumphant over other forms of government and likely to spread across the globe, sweeping all other forms of government away. Now not all the world seems so sure. Disillusionment with democracy is reported especially in the so-called heartlands, its norms are sometimes being ignored, and other forms of government, including more authoritarian regimes, are alive and exercising their muscles on the world stage. Is that sort of analysis correct? If not, what is happening to democracy today? How do we Christians respond to that? Do we regard democracy as a good thing?

What does history say to us about the relationship between Christianity and democracy? What views of democracy do we Christians take today and should we be doing anything to address current questions around it? These are the sorts of issues we will explore during the course.

Stephen Heap is a Baptist minister and emeritus Professor of Theology at the University of Winchester. He is the author of various articles on theology, politics and education including, most recently, one on what led to the Brexit vote, and the editor of The Universities We Need: theological perspectives (Routledge, 2017). He lives in retirement near Bedford and is an Adviser to BELIEF.

Saturday 2nd July 10.30am to 3.30pm
at Priory Methodist Church, Newnham Avenue, Bedford MK41 9QJ
£10 per person either payable on the day or bookable via Eventbrite using this link <<< LINK REMOVED >>>

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Mini Science & Faith Course for BELIEF Bedford on Zoom

Saturday 24th September
Rev Dr Dave Gregory ----- (Science & Faith for children)

Saturday 1st October
Dr Martin Hodson ----- (Biodiversity)

Saturday 8th October
Canon Dr Tim Bull ----- (Artificial Intelligence)

Each event will start at 10.30am and will run for two one-hour sessions separated by a break, finishing at 1.00pm.

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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

email BELIEF@StAndrewsBedford.org

BELIEF is registered as a charity, number 1123911



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**

Next Messy Church will be Saturday 11th June from 11.00am – 1.00pm

- **Oakley**

Messy Church for All hopes to meet on Tuesdays 17th May, 21st June, 19th July, depending on the COVID prevalence, from 3.30pm – 5.30pm.

Contact Jan Follett or Michael Carr for more details.

- **Willington**

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

MESSY CHURCH AT LONDON ROAD

Our last Messy Church on 23rd March was based on the Easter story.

We had 37 attendees and were happy to see old and new families and friends join us.



We had lots of fun completing a range of different crafts, including 'rolling the stone away' matchboxes and decorating crosses. We also had a journey through Holy Week in the style of an obstacle course for people to enjoy.

We shared some lovely but noisy worship together, led by our Worship Leader Andrew. We sang songs and waved palm leaves, read the Easter story and watched a video clip too.

Finally, we ended our Messy Church with an Easter egg hunt and some yummy packed lunches for all to enjoy.

Every child got a goody bag for Easter, and the ladies even got to take away a plant for Mothering Sunday 😊

Our next Messy Church will be on 11th June from 11.00am – 1.00pm and will hopefully be outdoors and will be based on the theme of ‘Foundations’ and our church anniversary celebration.



We hope you can join us for some fun. If you would like more information, please check out London Road Methodist Church on Facebook.

Hannah Mason

HOLIDAY CLUBS

CARDINGTON:

We are planning a Holiday Club – **JUBILEE JOY!** This will be held at Howard Memorial Church from Monday 15th to Friday 19th August from 6.30pm – 8.30pm.

CLAPHAM:

Joint Churches in Clapham will be running **PowerPoint Holiday Club** for 5-12-year-olds (Reception age to Year 7) from Monday 1st to Friday 5th August from 10.00am – 12.00pm at Clapham Parish Church site.

For more information, please contact pwrpnt.info@gmail.com

Circuit Diary Dates

FOR DETAILS OF OTHER EVENTS AROUND THE CIRCUIT PLEASE
SEE THE CIRCUIT WEBSITE 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.*

MAY

Tues 24th 9.30am Mission Resources Mission Stream meeting
- 11.30am (using Zoom)

JUNE

Wed 8th 7.30pm Circuit Meeting at **Putnoe Heights** (in person)

Sun 12th 4.00pm Easter Offering Service at **Priory**

JULY

Sun 24th 4.00pm Farewell Service for Rev Andrew Hollins at **Priory**

AUGUST

Wed 31st [t.b.c.] Service to welcome Rev Leslie Noon and
to mark Rev Michael Giles becoming Superintendent
for the North Bedfordshire Methodist Circuit
[venue to be confirmed]

SEPTEMBER

Mon 12th 10.45am MWiB meeting at **Ampthill Methodist Church**

Wed 14th 7.30pm Circuit Meeting at **Kempston East** (in person)

Sat 17th 10.00am Autumn Representative session of Synod
in the Bishop's Stortford Circuit

Churches should send their dates for the next Plan (with details of preachers they have booked) to **their Minister** by **Sunday 26th June**

Preachers should enter their availability on Chrestos by **Sunday 26th June**

All **Articles** for the next edition of the Circuit Magazine to a member of the editorial team no later than **Sunday 3rd July** 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
Circuit Charity Registration No. 1129523