

North

The **Methodist Church** 

Bedfordshire

Circuit

34/1

Magazine

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Spring 2023

**For as the soil makes the sprout come up
and a garden causes seeds to grow,**

**so the Sovereign Lord will make righteousness
and praise spring up before all nations**

Isaiah 61:11 NIV

The events listed within may be subject to hybrid arrangements due to the ongoing prevalence of COVID-19.

Please check relevant information prior to planning attendance.

Circuit information...see inside for further details.

For Lent, Holy Week and Easter services, see pages 18-20.

For diary dates, see page 30

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Primary Pastoral Responsibilities: Kempston East, Kempston West, Stewartby LEP,
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Deputy Superintendent
Rev Silas Wood *swood11@me.com* 01525 571392
Primary Pastoral Responsibilities: Ampthill, Clophill, Flitwick,
(Rest day – Friday) Haynes and Lidlington LEP

Rev Leslie Jane Noon *leslienoan@hotmail.com* 01767 304635
Primary Pastoral Responsibilities: Beeston, Cardington LEP, Priory (Bedford),
(Rest day – Saturday) Sandy and Trinity (Biggleswade)

Rev Chris Sandy *christopher.sandy@methodist.org.uk* 01234 860464
Primary Pastoral Responsibilities: Clapham, London Road (Bedford), Oakley,
(Rest day – Friday) Park Road (Bedford), Putnoe Heights and Sharnbrook

Rev Lorna Valentine *lorna.valentine@methodist.org.uk* 01462 813284
Primary Pastoral Responsibilities: Henlow, Langford, Shefford
(Rest day – Tuesday) and Upper Caldecote

Circuit Stewards

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



Circuit Mission Statement

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

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

and be
DISCIPLES OF JESUS

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

working for
GOD'S KINGDOM

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



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



Our Circuit Prayer

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

A Pastoral Letter

by Rev Leslie Jane Noon

Dear Friends

For the first time in my 17 years as a Minister, I'm not involved in a church pantomime. I'm not sure if I'm relieved or disappointed! Dressing up in ridiculous outfits (I've been a parrot on more than one occasion – see photo!) and performing on stage is not something that comes naturally to me. But in the two churches (one in Huddersfield and one in Swansea) where there has been a tradition of a church pantomime, I got involved. Mostly because I knew that being part of something like that would be good for nurturing relationships.



Relationships are at the heart of what we are all about in church: our relationship with God, our relationship with each other and our relationship with the world around us.

Lent is now (almost) upon us and it's a time for examining our relationships. A time for examining our relationship with God, and the way we live our lives. Joan Chittister, a Benedictine Sister says this: *“Lent is a call to weep for what we could have been and are not. Lent is the grace to grieve for what we should have done but did not. Lent is the opportunity to change what we ought to change but have not.”* If you think about it, this is all about relationship – with God, with people and with the world.

My prayer for you and me is that over the coming weeks of Lent we will take this time to examine the way we live our lives and our relationships. Where there is selfishness, may we offer kindness. Where there is violence, may we offer gentleness. Where there is exclusion, may we offer love. Where there is greed, may we offer generosity. Where there is anguish, may we offer hope. May we know God tenderly holding and enfolding us, through the days of Lent and beyond.

Back to the pantomime... All pantomimes have the same basic story – the triumph of good over bad. And of course, that's also at the heart of our own Christian story and one which we shall recall in our Holy Week and Easter services.

With love,

Leslie



And Wookie, (Leslie and Geoff's dog) writes this about Lent:

Hello my hooman friends. I understand from my hoomans that we have entered Lent, and that Lent is a time when we should be resolving to follow Christ more faithfully, to return to him with all our heart, mind and soul. This is where we see why the word 'dog' and the word 'god' are so similar. For as a dog, I follow my hoomans faithfully, and when they call, as you can see from this photo, I always return to them – well, if I'm honest, not always, especially if I'm sniffing an interesting sniff! But maybe you can do better than me when God calls.



With lots of woofs,

Wookiexx

Who is Julie Bradshaw, the new Supernumerary?

by Rev Julie Bradshaw

In the summer of 2021, my husband, Pete, and I moved to Bedford from Luton, as I retired, sat down. I had been 12 years in Luton as Superintendent Minister, mostly of the South Bedfordshire Circuit, I had loved this role, despite many challenges, but I was certainly looking forward to some sitting down.

It's taken a while, though, to adjust to life as a Supernumerary. I decided I'd keep a very low profile for a year, so far as the Methodist Church was concerned, not taking any preaching appointments, and saying "no" to any job that might be offered. I'm sure this was the right thing to do, to give myself some space for this time of transition, but it felt very strange and disorienting, mind you, everything did!

We're feeling pretty settled now in Bedford, a year or so on. We like it here very much, and, living in Dudley Street, it's lovely to be able to walk to many places: it's helped a lot with my health and fitness! So, since September, I have appeared on the Preaching Plan a few times, and it has been like coming home to be in Methodist churches and share in worship with them. Thank you, you have made me feel very welcome. I am also now serving as a supervisor for three Methodist Ministers, something I trained for as a Superintendent, and have experience in. It is good to be able to listen to Ministers on the front line and perhaps encourage them a little, and it helps me to feel connected and useful.

Finding the right place to worship was a tricky task, not helped by the newfound freedom of weekends when we could go away in our camper van or visit our children: we have five between us scattered around the country. They are all married, and three families have young children, so we are sometimes called on to help. In fact, one of the joys of retirement has been the opportunity to spend more time with my grandchildren, and it has been lovely having them to stay here: we're so lucky having Russell Park at the end of our road, and the river.

However, all these pulls on our time meant we were not in Bedford all that much at weekends, especially at first, when everyone was trying to make the most of the opportunity to mix and meet up that had been so difficult during the pandemic. I visited several nearby Methodist churches, but it's a strange thing being a retired Minister, and, somehow, they didn't feel quite right for this initial time as a Supernumerary. Then I looked at what were my nearest churches geographically, and clearly Christ Church, sitting in the same road as our house, looked like a possibility: I have always been ecumenically minded and grew up in the Church of England too. I crept into the back of the church and sat anonymously for a few services, not volunteering very much information about myself unless I was asked specifically. Strangely, this felt more comfortable and sustainable as a place to worship regularly, despite all that felt uncomfortable! I am now helping with a young people's group on a Sunday from time to time and regularly helping with an afterschool club for years five and six. I have been involved in youth and children's work all my life, and whilst a Minister, did what I could to encourage and support this work: it felt natural, then, to offer to help in this way. I am not sure if I will continue to attend Christ Church for ever, but, for now, attending my nearest local church seems like the right thing for me, and I love being able to leave just five minutes before the service begins and walk: somehow I still manage to be late sometimes!!

Settling in Bedford has been helped by joining some groups and starting some new hobbies. My husband and I both belong to Opus 18, the Community Choir that meets at Priory each week. I love to sing and have usually tried to belong to a choir wherever we have lived. My husband has been a Morris dancer for many years now, and he has joined Red Cuthbert Morris, a side that meets to practise in St Cuthbert's Church Hall. I was roped in when they did some singing for a Wassail event and went along to play my guitar. Before I knew it, I was one of the musicians on percussion, first tambourine, but now on drum. I have rather a lot of learning to do, but I'm giving it a try. It's fun

to go with them when they dance out and to have a part to play instead of just being in the audience.

I have always wanted to have a go at pottery so I looked for somewhere to pursue this now I have the time. Bedford Arts & Crafts Centre was the obvious choice, but their courses always seemed full, until a summer school came up in July 2022, and I was able to go for a week and learn some techniques. I loved it, and now I'm on the regular weekly course, enjoying playing with clay, even if some of the finished products are less than brilliant! I particularly appreciate the camaraderie of the group, just eight of us, focussing on clay but having a jolly good chinwag at the same time, lots of stories and good listeners, too.

I hope that this gives you some idea of who Julie Bradshaw, the new Supernumerary, is, a snapshot of me today. I look forward to getting to know the Circuit, and meeting some of you as I come to preach in your church over the coming years.

Rev Julie Bradshaw



Beds & Northants



**Therapy
Centre**

**Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre in Bedford
– celebrating our 40th anniversary this year**

The MS Therapy Centre is a charity that was set up in 1983 by a group of people with MS who decided that they wanted to provide help, support and therapy for others living with MS. Funds were raised and the centre has gone from strength to strength and won several awards over the years. It is not funded by the NHS and needs to find approximately £1,000 per day to cover its running costs, which is a huge challenge. All therapies are provided free to people with MS, but a donation is politely

requested. The facilities include two Baro chambers (for oxygen therapy), a large physio room, a specialist gym and a hydrotherapy pool. There are also a number of complementary therapies available such as reflexology, APS therapy, Bowen technique and sessions of Pilates and Tai Chi.

The Centre aims to provide a complete service that encourages people with MS to make the best of their lives. It is an integrated approach, with core therapies and complementary therapies being provided under one roof, that allows people to dip in and out of each therapy as required.



People do not need to be referred by a GP or specialist, but they will need to book a visit to see the facilities and have an appointment with one of the physiotherapists who will help to clarify whether any of the therapies on offer may be of benefit to them.

To find out more about the Beds and Northants MS Therapy Centre,
visit www.mscentrebedsandnorthants.com
or email reception@mscentrebedsandnorthants.com
or call 01234 325781 between
9.00am and 12.00pm Monday to Thursday.

CLAPHAM METHODIST CHURCH

- - - - REVISITED - - - -

by Helen Gadsden

When I was asked to do an update on Colin Shorley's piece as featured in the Spring 2018 Circuit magazine, I thought 'Where do I start?' Clapham Methodist Church has been established for 146 years, and over the years there have been major changes to the rooms and hall, but not in the last five years.

The facilities on offer are very much there for our local community: our Bookings Secretary had hardly any free slots prior to COVID. School for Seniors was thriving with healthy attendance each Wednesday. When we returned to the new 'normal', many hirers had secured alternative premises and things were looking 'bleak'. However, even with increased hire charges we now have several regular hirers.

On return to worshipping in church again (after COVID restrictions eased) we have a 10.00am service each Sunday, and attendance is between 20 and 30. We are fortunate to have our Minister Rev Chris Sandy with us on a regular basis leading us in worship, and are so blessed to have Local Preachers, and church members who willingly lead us in Local Worship (LW) three times each quarter. With much encouragement from Rev Chris, one LW is now led by the young people, which is wonderful. Sadly, during the last five years we said 'Goodbye' to our 8.15am Holy Communion and breakfast. For some members, this was hard to adjust to, as much fellowship had been shared preparing and eating together. Quite often our 10.00am preacher would arrive early to enjoy breakfast and fellowship too!

Youth Club (which met fortnightly on Friday evening) and Junior Church have been unable to restart since COVID. Our young people, few in number, offer so much, often reading a Bible passage on a Sunday morning and helping Stewards with practical tasks. In the last 12 months, Charles has felt a calling to be a Worship Leader, and as a

church we are really supporting and encouraging him. We are able to include a variety of worship music and traditional hymns, as our audiovisual system has been enhanced greatly by the installation of two large televisions to the front of the church, although we do need to improve the sound quality.

This spring we are starting up Bible study sessions in the form of a house group. We trust this initiative will enhance worship and knowledge of God's teaching.

Clapham is part of SCALLOP Mission Group of churches, and it is a pleasure to support the once a quarter service, when representatives from each church play a small part. Friendships and support networks have grown greatly through such services.

Our church works closely with our Anglican friends under 'Clapham Joint Churches' banner. We hold joint services for World Day of Prayer, Good Friday and in 2022, a Walk of Witness within the village which was a success, with all ages in attendance. We also join together for Powerpoint Children's Holiday Club, Party in the Park (alternate years in June – next one in 2024), Remembrance Sunday and Christingle Service. It is great to reach out to all in our community and bless them by such events.

Sadly, over the last few years our membership has dropped due to the passing of established members of the church and people's declining health. However, in recent months it has been a pleasure to welcome new members too. We now pray for the Holy Spirit to prompt and guide us as to how to serve our community and 'grow our church' and share the love of the Lord Jesus.

In closing a big Thank You to all who serve so willingly: each and every one is valued. Let's get excited about what the future holds for us as a church and Circuit.

Helen Gadsden

Senior Steward

LANGFORD METHODIST CHURCH

o o o o REVISITED o o o o

by Jenny Broadbridge

What has been happening at Langford Chapel in these last few years? Sadly, the children's work had already dwindled by the time COVID raised its ugly head. Sunday Club had shrunk to one Sunday a month, and as the numbers of children shrank still further, it was not viable to continue, especially as the leaders both moved away from the village. We pray that the excellent work done in previous years will continue to bear fruit in the young lives which were touched. Even Wacky Wednesday held in half-term week became more difficult with fewer children choosing to enrol and leaders becoming older.

Then COVID appeared and everything changed. During the time when the church was closed, we kept in regular touch with all our members and adherents through a weekly news sheet, which still continues. They all received either by email or hard copy the service published each week on the Methodist Church website. Many of us discovered Zoom, and joined in Rev Lorna's Mission Group service, each Sunday morning. When it was possible to meet outdoors in small groups, two of our members generously hosted us on Wednesday mornings in their garden, where we were able to distance ourselves conveniently. We held our Church Council there as well. As soon as it was allowed, we convened a Risk Assessment Committee and agreed to open at the earliest opportunity. Most people returned as soon as possible. With our media facilities now in place, we were able to enjoy a variety of

singing, videos, etc. to enhance our worship. This was especially valuable when we were unable to sing ourselves.

Wednesday coffee mornings have continued weekly and become popular with a number of people from outside the regular church fellowship. We have tried to hold Bible study and prayer times during the coffee mornings on some Wednesdays, but that has not been entirely successful and we need to think and pray about where we go from here. The first Sunday of every month is a Mission Group service for Lorna's four churches with the venues rotating. While not all the congregation are able or willing to travel to other churches, the number of Langford members who do attend is encouraging. We have continued to hold a Prayer Week in October when we set aside an hour each day to meet and pray for people and situations which have been brought to our attention.

At the end of November we welcomed the Stotfold Salvation Army Band who gave an evening of Christmas music. Despite a clash with England playing in the World Cup, the chapel was comfortably filled and everyone enjoyed the occasion.

The Anglicans joined us for our Covenant Service and this was followed by lunch in the schoolroom. We are a friendly, welcoming congregation, who would love to see new faces join us. We are hampered by our lack of parking, but continue in good heart, looking out for each other and trying to be good witnesses for Christ in our local area.

Jenny Broadbridge

Brokenness – by Margaret Byass

I wrote the poem 'Brokenness' a few years ago during Lent. There is so much brokenness in our world. The media brings it directly to us via TV or smartphone in all its graphic detail. All of us experience times of brokenness in our lives. I know I have, but I believe that Jesus, through His death and resurrection, can transform all brokenness. We just have to let Him.

Brokenness

Broken hop-es
Broken dre-ams
Broken prom-ises
Broken tru-st
Broken hea-rts

Broken-all brok-en

Broken hom-es
Broken friend-ships
Broken relation-ships
Broken liv-es
Broken peo-ple

Broken all brok-en

Broken rul-es
Broken cust-oms
Broken bar-riers
Broken lab-els
Broken chai-ns

**Broken all brok-en
Jesus has brok-en them all**

Broken bre-ad
Broken to share
Broken bo-dy
Broken freely

**Broken totally for love
Jesus all brok-en**

Broken to be vulnerable
Broken to risk
Broken to save
Broken to change
Broken to heal

**Broken totally for love
Jesus all brok-en**

Broken to make whole
Broken to bring new life
Broken to rise again
Broken to live

That's brok-en it all

Jesus transforms all brokenness!

(M.C.Byass 2017)

WORKING WITH LOCAL SCHOOLS AT PRIORY METHODIST CHURCH

Sharing the Christian story with children is so important, especially as many families do not have a Christian background, and opportunities such as *Open the Book* provide good ways of doing that. Priory has been blessed to work in a number of other ways with local schools recently.

Following a break because of COVID, we were thrilled to be welcoming the younger children from Goldington Green Academy (some 200 children plus teachers and helpers) back for Christingle this January. It's always an exciting event and wonderful to see the children walking back to school carefully clutching their completed Christingles.

This year, the older children used Priory as a venue for their Christmas assemblies. This was at the suggestion of one of the teachers at the school. It is good to know that they feel welcome with us, and there was good feedback from school staff and from the parents who attended.

In our worship on Education Sunday in September, we heard about the wonderful work of the *Impact* schools' workers in many schools in the Bedford area, leading assemblies, providing prayer spaces and lunch clubs and much more. As a result, several people signed up to support that work in prayer or financially. In addition, four people volunteered to take part in the Barn Nativity, which was held this year at St John's & St Leonard's Church in the town centre. The story of the Nativity was re-enacted in several scenes in the church and gardens and around 400 children attended, together with their teachers. They came from schools in Bedford and surrounding villages – as far away as Marston and Langford. This was a great way to share the real meaning of Christmas, and the children had lots of interesting questions. Each one took home a booklet with the Christmas story, which they could share with their family. From 27th – 31st March there will be a similar presentation of the Easter story. Volunteers will be needed for this, especially men – they need 12 disciples!!

You can find out more about this and the work of the schools' workers via the *Impact* website www.impactbedford.org.uk

Liz Little

SCRATCH NATIVITY AT FLITWICK

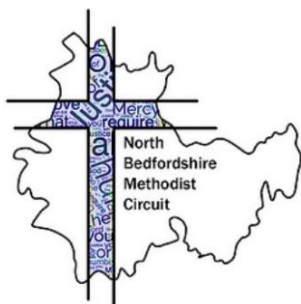
Flitwick once again had a Scratch Nativity. Without the COVID limitations that made for a somewhat subdued time in 2021, this year the storytelling was enjoyed with plenty of action. Members from Ampthill joined us for the service, and everyone was invited to come along dressed as whichever Nativity character they wished, whatever their age! The narrators were Angela & Matthew Brydon and the story unfolded in rhyming couplets. A Mary and a Joseph needed to be persuaded to step up, but all other characters came prepared, including Herod, who received pantomime style boos and hisses. The whole congregation got to play their part, as whenever a narrator said "Christmas" everyone responded "It's about Jesus".

The Scratch Nativity is an excellent and fun way of presenting the Nativity story that includes all ages. We don't have a regular Sunday School at Flitwick, but all our Brigade families were present at the Scratch Nativity, plus an additional family who had seen the event publicity on social media.

If anyone would like a copy of the Scratch Nativity, you can Google it or otherwise email angliab@outlook.com and I will be happy to pass on the script.

Angela Brydon

+++++



Remember man that you are dust, and unto dust you shall return.

Circuit Ash Wednesday Service

Wednesday 22nd February 2023, 7.00pm for 7.15pm
at Putnoe Heights Methodist Church led by Rev Chris Sandy

Churches not listed below may have services which were not known about at the time of printing this magazine.

22ND FEBRUARY – ASH WEDNESDAY

ANJULITA COURT (and Ladyslaude Court)	11.15am	Eucharist with ashing for residents, their families and friends
KEMPSTON EAST	7.30pm	United Service at The Church of the Transfiguration
KEMPSTON WEST		[join with Kempston East]
PUTNOE HEIGHTS	7.00pm for 7.15pm	Circuit Ash Wednesday Service led by Rev Chris Sandy
WILLINGTON	7.00pm	Anointing with Ashes Service at St John's Church, Moggerhanger
WOOTTON	9.30am	Ash Wednesday Service at St Mary's Church

LENT COURSES

AMPTHILL		We hope to do a 4-5-week course on Zoom every Thursday (details to be confirmed)
FLITWICK		Thursday @ Three Lent course running on Zoom, contact Rev Silas Wood for details
WILLINGTON	7.30pm - 9.00pm	Lent course, each Wednesday in Lent

HOLY WEEK EVENTS

Online meditations during Holy Week, organised by Rev Leslie Jane Noon

Holy Week for the whole Circuit

It's easy sometimes to skip Holy Week and go straight to Easter Sunday. But when we do this, we miss something vital in our story and the story of Jesus. We will therefore be producing for each day of Holy Week a short, contemplative video, with a reading, some music, a reflection and a time for meditation. Each video will be five to ten minutes long and can be viewed at home, on the train or wherever is convenient, at any time during the day to suit. Details of where the online videos can be accessed will be given nearer the time, but this is something for everyone. This year, why don't you GO ON THE JOURNEY.

Wednesday 5th April

ANJULITA COURT (and Ladyslaude Court)	11.15am	Service of reflection for residents, their families and friends
OAKLEY	6.30pm	Holy Week reflective service with meal

6TH APRIL - MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICES

AMPTHILL	7.00pm	Maundy Thursday service on Zoom
ANJULITA COURT (and Ladyslaude Court)	11.15am	Holy Communion by extension for residents, their families and friends
CLAPHAM	7.00pm	Supper and Holy Communion
FLITWICK	7.00pm	Maundy Thursday Mission Group Holy Communion
HENLOW		[join with Langford]
KEMPSTON EAST	7.30pm	United Service at The Church of the Transfiguration
KEMPSTON WEST		[join with Kempston East]
LANGFORD	7.30pm	Maundy Thursday Communion Service led by Rev Lorna Valentine <i>(for all four of Lorna's churches)</i>
LONDON ROAD (Bedford)	7.00pm	Maundy Thursday United Service at St Michael and All Angels
PRIORY (Bedford)		[join with Putnoe Heights]
PUTNOE HEIGHTS	6.30pm	Maundy Thursday Holy Communion led by Rev Chris Sandy <i>(shared with Priory)</i>
SHEFFORD		[join with Langford]
TRINITY (Biggleswade)	7.00pm	A Service of Light and Darkness including Holy Communion
UPPER CALDECOTE		[join with Langford]
WILLINGTON	7.00pm	Agape at St John's Church, Moggerhanger
WOOTTON		[join with Kempston East]

7TH APRIL - GOOD FRIDAY SERVICES

AMPTHILL	10.00am	Walk of Witness starting from St Andrew's Church, organised by <i>Churches Together in Ampthill and Flitwick.</i> Flitwick will join this.
ANJULITA COURT (and Ladyslaude Court)	2.00pm	Devotions for residents, their families and friends
BEESTON	10.30am	[Walk of Witness – see Sandy]
	3.00pm	A quiet service of symbolic action and reflection
CLAPHAM	9.45am	United Walk of Witness, starting at Clapham Methodist Church followed by
	11.00am	United Service at Clapham Methodist Church
CLOPHILL	10.30am	Good Friday Service

FLITWICK		[Walk of Witness – see Ampthill]
HENLOW	6.00pm	Good Friday Service
KEMPSTON EAST	10.00am	March of Witness from The Church of the Transfiguration to the Saxon Centre followed by refreshments at Bunyan Road Chapel, Kempston
	7.30pm	Kempston East Methodist present 'Jerusalem Joy', a musical by Roger Jones. Contact Barbara Tipping: 01234 852101 barbaratipping@outlook.com
KEMPSTON WEST		[join with Kempston East]
LONDON ROAD (Bedford)	12.00pm	Bedford Town Centre Good Friday Witness in Harpur Square
PRIORY (Bedford)	10.00am	A quiet service of symbolic action and reflection led by Rev Leslie Jane Noon. Friends from Putnoe Heights will join us for this service. This is followed by the Bedford Town Centre Good Friday Witness in Harpur Square at 12.00pm which many of our churches support.
PUTNOE HEIGHTS		[join with Priory]
SANDY	10.30am	Churches Together Walk of Witness, starting at Sandy Methodist Church followed by a short service at St Swithun's Parish Church
TRINITY (Biggleswade)		Churches Together Walk of Witness to the Market Square [<i>details t.b.c., see church newsletter</i>]
WILLINGTON	7.00pm	Service of reflection
WOOTTON	10.00am	Service of reflection followed by refreshments and hot cross buns

9TH APRIL – EASTER SUNDAY SERVICES

AMPTHILL	6.00am	Sunrise Service at Ampthill Park <i>(Churches Together in Ampthill and Flitwick)</i>
ANJULITA COURT (and Ladyslaude Court)	11.15am	Festal Eucharist for residents, their families and friends
FLITWICK		[join with Ampthill]
WOOTTON	6.00am	Sunrise Service with Wootton Churches

See the Circuit Plan for details of other services on Easter Sunday

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

PREACHERS TAKING APPOINTMENTS

1992	Brian Addington	1990	Pat Lilley
1992	Roz Addington	2008	Liz Little
2000	Brenda Ballantine	2021	Meredith Major
1992	Helen Boshier	1993	Ebo Ofori-Quaah
2009	Angela Brydon	2008	Claire Peck
1976	Michael Carr	2003	Sue Plant
2011	Paul Cooper	1975	Chris Robinson
1991	Alan Davis	2008	Glynne Rowlands
2021	Anne Foley	1996	John Sackett
1997	Graham Follett	1983	Ros Salisbury
2010	Chris Fox	2010	Geoff Talbot
2011	Hazel Hitch	2009	Perlynn Thomas
2005	Thea Lee	1970	Janet Watts
1973	Keith Lilley	2021	Angie Woodcraft

PREACHERS UNABLE TO TAKE APPOINTMENTS

1969	David Bushman	1965	Vivian Martyn
1970	Keith Harding	1978	Jim Ragless
1966	Chris Izzard	1954	Daphne Stiles
1978	Keith Jordan	1969	Silvia Thomas
1961	Pat Larman	1957	Archie Whitby

ACTIVE WORSHIP LEADERS

Amphill

Patsy Aston
Margaret Byass

Beeston

Sonia Butler
Mary Millar

Clophill

Anne Cooper
Victoria Higgins

Kempston East

Rosemary Simms
Stuart Simms
Geoff Talbot
Barbara Tipping

Langford

Jenny Broadbridge

London Road (Bedford)

John Caves
Andrew Constant

Oakley

Noel Evans
Jeanette Letch
Jane McVey

Priory (Bedford)

Lynne Gound
Marian Knights
Carmen Rowe

Sharnbrook

Marian Blyth

Shefford

Mairi Perks

Stewartby

Elaine Sullivan

Trinity (Biggleswade)

Tricia Mapletoft

Willington

Pat Davies
Keith Tompkins

May Day Festivals by Jonathan Payne

After the hardship of winter, and hunger of early spring, May was a time of merriment. May festivals go back to the dim and distant unrecorded past and were more commonly celebrated than they are today. May Day celebrations took their name from the Roman goddess Maia – the goddess of nature and growth: the month of May is named after her. The early Celts celebrated the feast of Beltane in honour of their sun god Beli. There are many May festivals held around the country and some feature a permanent maypole, while others erect one for the day. Ickwell is one of a small number of permanent maypoles in the UK.

The May Festival held on Ickwell Green near Biggleswade is one that dates back to 1565 according to the Churchwardens' accounts at Northill Church – the event celebrated its 450th anniversary in 2015! Early records indicate a traditional procession from Northill to Ickwell with the May Queen and her attendants followed by dancers, Old Scholars and Morris Men. Today, children living in the parish or attending one of the schools are invited to elect their May Queen and attendants. Dancers – children from Upper Caldecote along with those from Ickwell and Northill and the surrounding hamlets in the Northill Parish, dressed in period dresses and accompanied by lads in smocks,



take us back to times past, performing some traditional country dances in the arena and ribbon dances around the pole.

This festival is held on the picturesque village green with its ancient oak tree and the Old Smithy, once used by Thomas Tompion the renowned clockmaker who lived nearby. The green features cricket and football matches in season and is surrounded by some quaint thatched cottages – a typical ‘Old English’ village green.

A permanent maypole became a feature on Ickwell Green in the late 1800s, provided by Mr John Harvey, a former resident of Ickwell Bury. This replaced the pole which had been erected annually for the event. The pole has been replaced a number of times over the years due to age and decay. A new pole was erected in January 2022 and should serve us well for the next 40 years! The festival was cancelled during WWI and WWII, but the weather and COVID restrictions have been the cause of more recent cancellations. It did however make a welcome return in 2022. This year’s event on the early May Bank holiday on 1st May 2023 has events on the green from late morning and the procession leaves Northill at 1.30pm to be followed by the crowning of the new May Queen in the arena at 2.00pm. On the green there are also a number of stalls and sideshows run by local organisations and charities, and refreshments are available too. However, the Bedford and Letchworth Morris sides make their annual pilgrimage to the green to celebrate the arrival of May Day, 1st May at about 6.30am, with dancing around the maypole and singing some ‘May songs’.

Jon Payne

CLIFF
COLLEGE

Cliff Festival
PRESENTS



Eden Restored.

26 29 May 2023

A weekend of worship, teaching and
encounter for people of all ages. Come for
the day or camp for the weekend.

Free entry for under 18s.



Find out more at
cliffcollege.ac.uk/festival



festival

Staff, Circuit Stewards' and Friends' "Christmas Dinner"

by Stephanie Field

At the Staff and Stewards' Christmas Dinner in December, some of us participated in Secret Santa. We gifted the following virtual gifts:

- **All We Can** : Precious Water
In Zimbabwe, All We Can is working with local communities to provide families with easy access to clean water, helping to protect them from water-borne diseases.
- **All We Can** : Wonderful Weavers
Women in the Zambesi valley are provided with basket weaving training, which not only benefits them financially and socially but helps them to support their families and the wider community.
- **All We Can** : Tools for Success
This helps provide families in Zimbabwe with the tools and training they need to start growing vegetables for a nutritious diet and to develop an income they can depend on.
- **Fairtrade Cocoa Program**
Helping farmers and workers to improve their farms, build demand for their produce and strengthen their voice to negotiate a fairer deal.
- **FareShare** : Cost of Living Crisis Appeal – Donation of 100 meals
Millions more people are being forced into food poverty in communities across the country, and are facing unprecedented levels of economic hardship. Those in need are turning to the charities who we supply with food for help.
- **RNLI** : Fuel for a Lifeboat
- **Karibuni Children** : Mighty Meals for a Month
- **MacMillan Cancer Support**
- **Woodland Trust** : Trees for Bees
Trees provide a valuable habitat for bees as a place of shelter and a source of food and nectar. We all need bees and they need trees. The funds raised will go towards helping to create, restore and protect native UK woodland.



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

Messy Nativity took place at London Road on the afternoon of Sunday 11th December.

Messy Church, whether held on a Saturday or a Sunday, is always well supported. Everyone enjoyed sharing in activities and lively worship as we learnt more about the real meaning of Christmas. Of course there was food too and so it was only right that the offerings were donated to Bedford Food Bank.



OAKLEY

Messy Church for All takes place after school from 3.30pm – 5.30pm (all ages welcome – all children to be accompanied) as follows:- Tuesdays 21st February, 21st March, 16th May and 20th June.

If possible, please do let us know that you can come by calling 01234 824504 or send an email to mcarr49@hotmail.com



Contact Jan Follett or Michael Carr for more details.

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

TRINITY (Biggleswade)

3rd Saturday in the month 10.30am – 12.30pm

Families welcome - lunch Included.



WILLINGTON

Messy Church takes place from 3.30pm – 5.30pm as follows:-

Wednesdays 15th March, 19th April, 17th May.



Circuit Men's Luncheon Fellowship

The lunch is held on the second Wednesday of each month, at Priory Methodist Church, Newnham Avenue, Bedford. Welcoming drinks are served at 12.15pm and we sit down to eat at 12.35pm. We each bring our own packed lunch (varying numbers and uncertainty about final attendance have made serving a prepared lunch impractical) but we serve soup with the meal and tea or coffee afterwards. Our programme includes some hymns, a Bible reading and prayers, and after lunch we have a speaker or an alternative activity. We finish at about 2.30pm. We ask for a donation of £3.50 each, for each lunch attended, to cover costs including the use of the room. Please tell Mike Elliott (mike.elliott@zapboing.com) if you are interested: he will send you any updated information and reminders.



METHODIST WOMEN IN BRITAIN
NORTH BEDFORDSHIRE CIRCUIT

COFFEE MORNING

9 am - 12 noon

TUESDAY 21st FEBRUARY

at

TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH
SHORTMEAD STREET
BIGGLESWADE
SG18 0AP

in aid of

QUEEN VICTORIA SEAMEN'S REST
at **TILBURY**

*THERE WILL ALSO
BE A SALES TABLE*

This is the Charity which our District MwiB are currently supporting and we are teaming up with Trinity's normal Footprints Coffee Morning



The QVSR has a number of Centres around the British Isles, but our focus is on Tilbury.

Facilities include

Wi-Fi • TV Lounges • Chapel • Shop • Bar • Light Refreshments • Books • Clothing • Pool table table tennis & an Outdoor Recreational Area.

ALL MUCH APPRECIATED BY LONELY SEAFARERS, FAR FROM HOME

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
due to the ongoing prevalence of COVID-19.*

Please check relevant information prior to planning attendance.

Circuit Men's Luncheon Fellowship is held on the second Wednesday
of each month at **Priory, Bedford**. (see page 28 for details)

FEBRUARY

- | | | |
|------------|----------------------|--|
| Tues 21st | 9.00am
– 12.00pm | MWiB Coffee Morning at Trinity, Biggleswade
(see page 29 for details) |
| Wed 22nd | 7.00pm
for 7.15pm | Circuit Ash Wednesday Service
at Putnoe Heights |
| Thurs 23rd | 7.30pm | Circuit Meeting <u>IN PERSON</u> at Priory, Bedford |

MARCH

- | | | |
|---------------------|--------|--|
| Sat 4th | 2.00pm | Daffodil Day at Central Hall Westminster |
| Wed 15th | | Presbyteral Synod at Bishops Stortford Methodist Church |
| Fri 24th – Sun 26th | | The MWiB District Weekend at High Leigh. The theme is
"Who put the Colours in the Rainbow?" and will be led by
Esther Hume, Local Preacher and former District
President and Forum Rep.
The cost is £185 in single en-suite accommodation.
Further details from Jenny Broadbridge
(01462 701127 or broadbridge42@icloud.com). |

APRIL

- | | | |
|------------|---------|--|
| Sat 22nd | 10.00am | Spring Synod at The Square Methodist Church, Dunstable |
| Thurs 27th | t.b.c. | Local Preachers' and Worship Leaders' Meeting
[<i>arrangements to be confirmed</i>] |

MAY

- | | | |
|---------------------|--|--|
| Fri 26th – Mon 29th | | Cliff Festival – "Eden Restored" at Cliff College
(see page 25 for details) |
|---------------------|--|--|

JUNE

- | | | |
|------------|--------|--|
| Thurs 22nd | 7.30pm | Circuit Meeting [<i>venue to be confirmed</i>] |
|------------|--------|--|

JANUARY 2024

- | | | |
|-----------|--------|--|
| Tues 23rd | 7.30pm | Circuit Church Treasurers' meeting using Zoom |
|-----------|--------|--|

Ministers in other appointments

Rev Chrissie Howe *howec@methodistchurch.org.uk* 07799 902568
(Secretary of the Methodist Forces Board)

Rev Terry Wright *terry.wright144@mod.gov.uk* 07581 009784
(Forces Chaplain at Chicksands)

Ecumenical, Authorised & Associate Ministers

Rev Sarah Burrow *sarah.burrow@mha.org.uk* 01234 273642
Anglican (Anjulita Court and Ladyslaude Court MHA Chaplain)

Rev Martin Truscott *martintruscott@gmail.com* 07989 965172
URC (Minister - Cardington)

Rev Catherine Wilson *vicar@bromhambenefice.org* 01234 825665
Anglican (St Mary's Church, Oakley)

Supernumerary Ministers

Rev Richard Barrett *regbarrett2@btinternet.com* 01767 312723

Rev David Bown *davidbown47@hotmail.co.uk* 01234 589194

Rev Julie Bradshaw *julie@iw2.co.uk* 01234 405530

Rev Bill Davies *wjdavies35@outlook.com* 01234 210918

Rev Douglas Ford

Rev Jim Gorringe *jimgorringe@icloud.com* 01234 216352

Rev Cassandra Howes *cassandra.howes@gmail.com* 01234 793177

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Deacon Vera Pearson 01234 270737

Rev David Winwood *david.j.winwood@btinternet.com* 01234 359930

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Shaun Endersby *shaun@oddpst.com* 01767 220623
(Technical Editor)

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

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

All **Articles** for the next edition of the Circuit Magazine to a member of the editorial team no later than **Sunday 2nd April** please

The Circuit Manager (Stephanie Field) is mostly home based, and can be contacted either by email northbedscircuitoffice@gmail.com or mobile 07522 928936.

The Circuit Finance Officer (Anne Ainley) works on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday mornings mostly from home, and can be contacted either by email northbedsfinance@gmail.com or landline 01234 831174 or mobile 07787 104540.

All post can now be sent to the Circuit Office.
Both are happy to meet people at the Circuit Office if required.

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

Magazine editorial information

A meeting to discuss the content of the next issue will be held using Zoom on **Friday 3rd March** at 7.30pm

EVERYONE WELCOME

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

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

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

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

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