

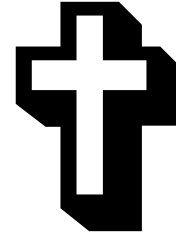
The Methodist Church – Bristol District

Upper Thames Circuit

Monthly Newsletter

No 31

July/August 2016



An Outward Looking Church

As I prepare to write this, many thoughts are cascading into my mind. The referendum has just happened and we may (who knows?) see our relationship with Europe change soon. Our Prime Minister has announced his resignation and most likely there will be a new leader for the Labour Party too. But what has that to do with being an outward looking Church?

Everything and nothing!

When the Circuit Meeting met in April and discussed being outward looking we came up with some ideas which were collated and reviewed by the Circuit Leadership Team and a report was presented and adopted by the Circuit Meeting in June. Now we must start to take action or it will be a waste of time.

Engagement with JPIT:

The Joint Public Issues Team is a campaigning group involving several Christian denominations in Great Britain, which focusses on politics with a small p. In the very near future each circuit church will be asked to identify a person to be the conduit for information from and to a circuit group aimed at informing each member about the issues that are current.

Becoming a Fair Trade Circuit:

So much good work has been done in this area in the past, but there is much more to do and we want to find ways to encourage each church to engage with and promote fair trade in their local community. In Jeremiah 7 God speaks to the people of Israel, calling them to act justly in all their dealings.

Promoting Social Justice in our worship:

At the Worship Leaders and Preachers meeting on 25th July we shall be delving into the report which the Circuit Meeting has adopted and seeing where we can develop some of the strong Bible themes in the areas of justice and social involvement. We have a strong tradition of being an evangelical Circuit, this is to be encouraged, but alongside the Gospel theme of Salvation by Faith in Jesus Christ, which is the Gift of God, there is the call to care for our environment and for those who are weak, poor and sick. In Luke 4:16-21 Jesus announced his mission here on earth to his home town, quoting from Isaiah 61.

Caring for Refugees:

...or even caring for *a* refugee. How would it be if we, the Upper Thames Methodist Circuit, were to sponsor a refugee? We agreed to explore this idea and see where it takes us. Jesus' own family found themselves refugees as did Jacob and his family thousands of years earlier.

Two other areas were highlighted in the report, **Young People & Environmental**. These will both take a little more investigation and planning, so watch this space for news.

To finish I want to take us back to the Bible and to a favourite passage of Evangelical Christians, from John 3, where Jesus, talking with Nicodemus, outlined the mission of God as being to save the whole world, or cosmos as the original Greek translates. Jesus' mission was to the whole world and it was to bring good news to the poor and healing to the sick and sight to the blind and even freedom to prisoners. The work of Jesus of course was accomplished upon the cross. We look forward to the day when his kingdom rule will be seen here on earth just as it is in heaven and whenever we pray the 'Lord's prayer' we call for just that. There are two fundamental mistakes that Christians make in this area:

One is to focus only upon the story of salvation as personal salvation; the other is to focus only on the social aspect of the gospel, and working to achieve through our own work the salvation of the world.

The work of salvation is both personal and social; it is the supremely the work of Jesus, but just as right in the beginning God made humans responsible for their environment and their social relationships, so he calls us to live responsibly in the world. I commend to you the report and the actions we are taking to ensure that issues of justice and environmental awareness are high on the agenda of the Upper Thames Circuit.

May God bless you and may His will be done and may his Kingdom come here upon earth just as it is in Heaven.

Rev Keith Osborn

NB: The deadline for items for the September newsletter is Thursday, 25th August

DISTRICT AND CONNEXION NEWS/EVENTS:

New Room

Please see Appendix 'A' for all the latest news and events taking place at the New Room.

A Note from Emma Wills

As hopefully many of you will know, sadly I have been off work for 3.5 months for different reasons, with the more recent reason being a broken ankle, but the good news is that I'M BACK!

As you can imagine after all that time there will be a lot of catching up to do and I will need time to generally get back on my feet again (including literally as I'm still hobbling around with ligament damage and am not allowed to drive again for at least another week!!), so please bear with me initially. Also I'm away all next week at The Methodist Conference in London.

In all the chaos of my last few months my memory is even more shocking so PLEASE don't ever hesitate to remind me of anything I have forgotten!! Also annoyingly my random emailing issue continues where for a very small number of people we don't seem to be able to receive/send emails when either of us click "reply" (despite lots of people looking into the issue!). So if I ever don't respond to an email you have sent within a week or so please try again or use another method as I hate the idea of missed opportunities or that people think I'm ignoring them! My mobile number is below along with the district Facebook group and my home email is emma.j.mills@blueyonder.co.uk

The youth workers who have been involved in district youth events were informed during my time off that it was possible that there consequently wouldn't be the expected district youth event this Sep/Oct. We are still considering organising something, even if only an evening event such as a disco, in the late Autumn/Winter so watch this space. The DYC (District Youth Council) will be discussing options when they meet soon.

Many thanks as always for the support (personally and Youth Work Enabler role wise) and thanks for your patience, many thanks

Emma

CIRCUIT NEWS/EVENTS:

Upper Thames Circuit Celebrates its 20th Birthday with a Circuit Service

The Upper Thames Circuit will celebrate its 20th birthday on 1st September. This achievement will be recognised at the Circuit Service Abbey Meads, on 4th September at 6.30pm, which will also be a service of welcome for Rev Rachael Wilson as she becomes the minister of that church. A poster advertising the service is at the end of this newsletter and is also available as an attachment to the email to which this newsletter is attached. Please publicise this event widely within your church and community.

Jan and Gordon Partridge Celebrate 50 Years of Marriage

Congratulations to Jan and Gordon on celebrating their Golden Wedding Anniversary! There will be a party at Toothill Church on July 30th from 2pm – 4pm. An invitation is included at the end of this newsletter.

Proposed Circuit trip to Oberammergau in 2020 – Last Chance to Register your Interest!

In 2000 I organised a church pilgrimage/holiday to Austria and Bavaria to see the Passion Play that is performed every 10 years by the residents of the small Bavarian Village of Oberammergau. Several people have asked me whether I would be prepared to organise a similar trip to see the play when it is next performed in 2020.

Why mention this now when we are only part way through 2016, you may ask. Well there are a few reasons. Firstly, the play which is performed about 3 times a week throughout the summer (from memory from June to September I believe) gets booked up a long time in advance (with large numbers of tickets being taken by tour companies and operators) so to have any chance of getting seats for preferred dates it is necessary to apply in very good time. Secondly, the trip will, like most such trips, not be cheap, especially if there are several of one family wishing to come, so the sooner we start saving the better!

Michele and I have just returned from a holiday in Austria and whilst there I took the opportunity to speak to the director of the hotel that we regularly stay in, to ask whether he would be prepared, at a discounted rate for a fairly large party, to accommodate us. Not only was he happy to confirm that he would be prepared to do so but he also said that he would also be able to obtain the tickets for the play and to arrange coach transport for the party while we were staying at the hotel. That would only leave me to organise coach transport to and from the airport in the UK and also to organise the flights.

My suggestion at this stage is that if I can get some indication of the numbers of people who would be interested, then I could attempt to get some idea of the costs likely to be involved. I anticipate a coach from here to either Heathrow or Gatwick, flights to and from the UK to (preferably) Innsbruck or Munich, 7 days accommodation at Hotel Seespitz, Seefeld in Tyrol Austria and seats for a performance of the play.

I anticipate that some people may not know about the play, suffice it to say that it is a wonderful re-enactment of our Lord's Passion leading up to his crucifixion. If you put Oberammergau Passion Plays into Google you will find numerous websites which give information about the play, its history etc. and www.seespitz.at will take you to the Seespitz Hotel website. Seefeld itself is ideally placed to get to a host of interesting places in the Tyrol and Southern Germany.

I would be happy to come to your church to talk in more detail about this proposal, but if in principle you would be interested in being part of this holiday (no firm commitment necessary yet but a deposit will be required at some time) please let me know AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

Paul Holloway, Circuit Steward.
01793 784479 or p.d.holloway@btinternet.com

Vacancy for Pioneer Worker at Abbey Meads

There is still time (just!) to make an application for the Pioneer Worker post – a full time post. A copy of the advertisement is featured at Appendix 'B' of this newsletter. For further information please contact the Circuit Office.

Braydon Methodist Church

Coffee and Chat

Come along to share fellowship and talk to the stewards about anything you feel we need to discuss concerning the running of Braydon Chapel. Saturday 16th July: 10am – 12 noon.

Camp Service

There will be a Camp Service at Braydon on Sunday 18th September. The theme will be outreach – with a need to expand God's Kingdom, to increase our enthusiasm by bringing us together to increase, enliven and uplift our desire to take the wonderful spirit of Jesus further into our communities. Thoughts will be centred around the Good Samaritan and the road to Emmaus. Gates will open at 12.30pm for a hog roast (thus enabling folk to attend their usual morning service before coming for lunch). The tent celebration service will follow at 2.30pm for approximately two hours, depending on how the Spirit leads. Seating will be provided. Young, talented musicians, along with those who have extreme talent on piano and electric organ will accompany, with choral voices to lead our singing.

The venue will be the recreation ground or playing fields behind the old Methodist Chapel in Brinkworth village (postcode SN15 5AG) where new amenities have recently been put in place, so electricity, toilets, kitchen and ample parking are all available to us. The location will be signposted on the B4042 approximately 4.5 miles from Royal Wootton Bassett, heading towards Malmesbury. Posters and fliers will be distributed within the Circuit and Phil Neville would like to visit your church to offer a personal invitation and enthusiastically outline the arrangements for the day. Local churches of other denominations have been invited to join us, along with youth groups, young farmers' clubs, vintage and veteran machinery clubs, etc. so we anticipate a joyous union, an uplifting of spirits and a will to join in raising the profile and presence of Jesus in our lives and to carry it forward into the lives of others.

We are honoured that the Chairman of the District, Rev Dr Jonathan Pye, will be joining us, as will Rev Keith Osborn, Rev Rachael Wilson and Rev David Perkins who in particular, will act as the service leader and master of ceremonies for the day.

Braydon Chapel has offered itself to God, through its congregation, in organising this event. Please come and join us and we ask you to try, wherever possible, to invite someone you know who possibly hasn't found our Lord as yet, to come and share in the fun and uplifting of spirits on this special day and maybe our Lord will fill those hearts yet empty, with the wondrous spirit that has been found by us.

On behalf of the Braydon Methodist Chapel and the organising committee.

Phil Neville (Steward)

Church of Christ the Servant, Abbey Meads

This will be the venue for a **Circuit Service** at 6.30pm on the 4th September, when Rev Rachael Wilson will be welcomed as the minister. This will coincide with Rachael's post as minister becoming a full-time post, thus allowing her to continue with her existing commitments as minister of Cricklade United Church and Blunsdon Methodist Church.

Shrivenham Methodist Church

Café Inspire

On Saturday 18th June we had a great day out in Weston-Super-Mare on the 96 seater coach and were treated to an air display (including the Red Arrows) during our time there. Picnics on the beach and games featured strongly, and the local tea/coffee shops (and at least one pub) did a good trade too!

The next Café Inspire will be held on 9th July in the Shrivenham Primary School, from 10.00am until 11.30am. Come along for a coffee, a bacon roll and/or some yummy cake and a chance to chat to folk of all ages who enjoy doing the same. Activities (creative and otherwise) are provided for younger and older children. Café Inspire does not meet during August.

OTHER NEWS/EVENTS AND ITEMS OF INTEREST

Christian Vision for Men – The Gathering

We heard last evening that around 300 men had either committed their lives to Christ or had re-committed themselves to Him over the week-end. That's about 10% of those attending – Praise God!

Does anyone have a spare data projector they could donate?

Graham Stockill is looking to acquire a data projector to use at Cricklade United Church for a new film club that is being piloted. It goes under the name "Holywood" and aims to study theology through the medium of films, which are aimed mainly at youngsters and will be up to PG rating. Whilst Royal Wootton Bassett Methodist Church has kindly loaned a projector for the pilot, if the project takes off, a permanent replacement would be ideal. You can contact graham by email at: graham.stockill@gmail.com or by telephone on (01793) 750095.

News from Ammerdown

July

9 July – Be your own life coach led by Sue Glanville This one-day workshop will give you a rare opportunity to learn how to be your own life coach. Use the day to learn how to review your life balance, gain confidence, create goals and change your life for the better! For further information or to book a place go to <http://ammerdown.org/Be-Your-Own-Life-Coach-2016> ring 01761 433709 or e-mail centre@ammerdown.org

August

12 to 14 August Praying with Music- Gerald Finzi led by Euan Tait Euan returns this year with a retreat of wonder-full English music. He writes: *"Finzi looks into the human heart and asks us to rediscover the beauty of our humanity, the constant newness of our vision of the world, our own unique song. Yet his music also faces and engages with our heart's struggle with honesty and clear-sightedness, and it is these qualities that make it such a powerful force for our prayer life."* For further information or to book a place go to <http://ammerdown.org/Praying with Music-Gerald Finzi-2016> ring 01761 433709 or e-mail centre@ammerdown.org

19 to 21 August Soulful led by Ian and Gail Adams Their 2016 weekend retreat at Ammerdown is based on the premise that the world needs more people living with authenticity, passion and compassion. More soulful people, as Gail and Ian describe it. For further information or to book a place go to <http://ammerdown.org/Soulful-2016> ring 01761 433709 or e-mail centre@ammerdown.org

29 August to 2 September Teshuvah (Repentance in Hebrew) – Reaching new Heights led by Sr Maureena Fritz NDS This time, she will explore the true meaning of Repentance (or 'Teshuvah' in Hebrew), drawing on Jesus' teaching: *"Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance."* (Lk. 15.7). Maureena will examine her chosen theme by introducing diverse forms of interpretation of Scripture, which will foster attention not only to the sacred text but also to the world and to divine reality. Poetry and film will accompany the study of the Biblical texts. For further information or to book a place go to <http://ammerdown.org/Teshuvah-2016> ring 01761 433709 or e-mail centre@ammerdown.org

September

16 to 18 September Healing Tide- A weekend guided retreat led by Sarah Chabowska and Libby Dobson who will be combining their special gifts as composer and musician (Libby) and poet and photographer (Sarah) to take you on a journey of discovery into the healing tides of God's love. Give your spirit space to breathe, and your soul an opportunity to be restored, as we reflect together upon the ebb and flow of life. For further information or to book a place go to <http://ammerdown.org/Healing Tides-A-Weekend-Guided-Retreat-2016> ring 01761 433709 or e-mail centre@ammerdown.org .

16 to 18 September 'Go west young man' Travels with St Paul With the help of Revd Ward Jones, you will join St Paul on parts of his missionary travels, exploring the people and places he visited and seeking to understand why he said and wrote as he did and what it might mean for us in our own time. For further information or to book a place go to <http://ammerdown.org/Go-West-Young-Man-2016> ring 01761 433709 or email centre@ammerdown.org.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

Sunday 3 rd July	Application deadline for the Pioneer Worker vacancy at Abbey Meads
Thursday 14 th July	Interviews for the Pioneer Worker vacancy at Abbey Meads (please pray for the right person of God's choice to be selected)
Saturday 16 th July	Coffee and Chat at Braydon Chapel: 10am-12 noon
Saturday 10 th September	District Synod
Thursday 15 th September	Circuit Leadership Team Meeting, 17 Wentworth Park, Freshbrook, 7.30pm
Sunday 18 th September	Hog Roast (12.30pm) and Camp Service (2.30pm) hosted in Brinkworth by Braydon Chapel
Tuesday 27 th September	Circuit Meeting, Purton Methodist Church, 7.30pm

A PRAYER FOR RENEWAL

Heavenly Father, in Jesus' name we ask for a fresh outpouring of your Holy Spirit on your church in our community. Help us to grow in our experience of your love, forgiveness and healing. Challenge our contentment to stay as we are. Renew our vision of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, that through our words and the way we live, others may be drawn to your way. Give us the wisdom to seek your will and grant us the joy that comes from wholeheartedly following it. For your glory and the good of all your people.

Amen

UPPER THAMES CIRCUIT CONTACT DETAILS:

Office hours: 9.30am – 12.30pm on Wednesdays and Fridays
Please note: The office will be closed between 27th May and 8th June (inclusive).

Telephone: (01793) 764544

Email: upperthamescircuit@gmail.com

Email: superkeithosborn@gmail.com

Postal Address: Highworth Methodist Church
Vicarage Lane
Highworth
Swindon SN6 7AD

Come and Celebrate

with

Jan and Gordon

July 30th

2-4pm

Cream tea

**We have been married for 50 years and
would like to invite you to join us at**

Toothill Church

Please just come we don't want gifts - just your company!

News from The New Room, June 2016

Tour goes all the way to the top!

HORSEFAIR PROJECT UPDATE: Our Manager David Worthington is pictured on the top floor of our new building. This was taken during a special progress tour of the Horsefair site which was also attended by Kathryn Davis, Head of Tourism at Destination Bristol. With Beard Construction Project Manager Harry Humphrey-Ackumey supervising the site tour, they were able to explore all three levels of the new visitor centre.

The photograph shows David standing very near to where his new office will be! On this top floor, there will also be another office space which will be used by the Education Officer and Community Engagement Officer; an education room with a small kitchen attached to it and access to the new museum. The education room will provide extra space for learning workshops, meetings and for groups to hire. It will also have a balcony which will look out over the atrium.

Since this photograph was taken, the construction team has started to pour concrete onto the three levels of the structure to create solid floors. All is on schedule and we are looking forward to seeing what happens next.

Wesley goes Warhol!

The New Room's Community Engagement Officer, Lucie, has created a Warhol-style leaflet to give people ideas about how to get involved with our historic site. Groups and individuals can engage with the New Room in all sorts of ways - from simply popping in, going on a tour, taking part in a learning workshop, using our space for an event, working in partnership on a project or simply visiting our Facebook page. The leaflet gives ideas about how people can get involved and contact details about how to do this.

Lucie has also created a volunteer recruitment flier to promote the fact that we are actively looking to recruit 200 more volunteers! The flier provides information about existing and future volunteer opportunities and gives contact details if you, or anyone from your group, church or organisation, is interested in finding out more.

If you would like some copies of the leaflet and flier please contact Lucie. These can be given out to contacts, friends and groups as we have plenty of copies! We are asking for everyone's support in spreading the word about how we want to work with Bristol's diverse communities!

For more information contact Lucie on 0117 926 4740 or email community@newroombristol.org.uk.

Learning about the Wesleys - for all ages

Do you know a school class, a Junior Church group or a uniformed organisation like Scouts or Boys/Girls Brigade who might like to find out more about John Wesley and the New Room? Tours, talks and workshops run by our Education Officer Mandy Briggs are available all year round. Find out why John Wesley came to Bristol, why he built the New Room and why there was a riot in the chapel in 1788! There is also a new Activity Guide to the New Room with puzzles, cartoons and a secret code to crack. For more details or for copies of the Education leaflet and the Activity Guide, please contact Mandy on 0117 926 4740 or email education@newroombristol.org.uk

Remembering the Holocaust

On Thursday 28th July, author and historian, Agnes Grunwald-Spier will be visiting the New Room to tell us about her latest book - 'Who Betrayed the Jews? The Realities of Nazi Persecution In The Holocaust'.

The book is a study that examines the various ways Jews were betrayed by their fellow countrymen during the Holocaust. Grunwald - Spiers reveals the story of the slave labourers who toiled for German firms; the plight of Jewish Olympians who were murdered; and the impact of Nazi policies on people like Agatha Christie and Margaret Thatcher.

The event will be held from 11am - 12.30pm in the chapel.

For more information contact Liam Mckenna by emailing mckennal@methodistchurch.org.uk or calling 077 999 02 570.

Terrific Tuesdays - Summer at the New Room

We will be organising 'Colour and Craft' fun on every Tuesday during the summer holidays. Our 'Terrific Tuesdays' will be drop in sessions running from 10am - 4pm. The first session will take place on Tuesday 26th July and the last one will be on Tuesday 30th August. Activities will include flag making, clay modelling and mug decoration.

There will also be colouring activities for grown ups who might want to explore their own creativity while having a coffee! We hope to hold these events in the Broadmead courtyard... if the weather is good. If not, they will be inside the chapel.

For more information contact: education@newroombristol.org.uk.

Looking Ahead - Paul Field in Concert

**Well known
singer/songwriter Paul Field
will be in concert at the New
Room on Friday, September
30th at 7.30pm. Put this date
in your diary now for what is
sure to be a fantastic evening.**

Lunchtime concerts

**The New Room's Musical Director,
Philip Carter, has arranged two
lunchtime concerts in July.**

**The first one will be on July 8th,
when Nigel Nash will be
accompanied by students from the
Red Maids' School. On July 22nd,
Tim Forder will be playing the
organ. Both concerts start at
1.30pm.**

The Upper Thames Circuit and The Church of Christ the Servant, Abbey Meads are seeking an enthusiastic and committed:

Pioneer Worker

to take up their duties between September and December 2016. This is a new, full-time position within the ecumenical partnership. The successful candidate will develop and deliver a programme of mission and ministry, including new expressions of the Christian faith, in the North Swindon Area, building a team, working with the Minister and local ecumenical partners to make Jesus known through strategic community engagement, working with existing ministries of the church and pioneering new work.

The appointee will, by experience and action:

- demonstrate a personal faith in Jesus and be committed to the values and ethos of the Christian life,
- motivate, encourage and enable others, building strong and effective relationships,
- be willing to work with other churches, church workers and organisations
- display leadership, enthusiasm, dynamism and care for others, as well as working effectively as part of a team,
- identify the needs and assets of the church and local communities, seeking to optimise their deployment.

To obtain an application form (Appendix 5.8 of Lay Employment Advisory information on Methodist Church Web Site) or further information please contact:

Bob Mawer
Circuit Administration Assistant
Highworth Methodist Church
Vicarage Lane
Highworth
Swindon
Wilts SN6 7AD

Email: upperthamescircuit@gmail.com

Tel: (01793) 764544 (Wednesday and Friday mornings)
www.upperthamescircuit.org.uk

Salary: £21,000 – 25,000 per annum

This is a fixed term contract for 3 years.

Closing date for applications: Sunday 3rd July 2016

The Upper Thames Circuit



CIRCUIT SERVICE

**to celebrate the 20 year anniversary of
the Upper Thames Circuit and to welcome
Rev. Rachael Wilson to a new phase of ministry
at Christ the Servant, Abbey Meads**

6.30 p.m. - Sunday 4th September 2016

**Church of Christ the Servant, Abbey Meads
Abbey Meads Village Centre SN25 4YX**

Preacher: Rev. Keith Osborn (Superintendent Minister)

ALL WELCOME