

Upper Thames Methodist Circuit 7/23

Bristol District



June Newsletter 2017

This month's opening letter has been written by Mr Andrew Fleet, Senior Circuit Steward

God in the Now

One of the good things about **being in a Circuit** is the possibility it creates for churches not only to support one another but also to share and to pray for one another.

A few weeks ago one of our supernumerary ministers lent me a book she'd been reading: **Tom Wright's "Simply Jesus"** – it is a fascinating read and I can recommend it. One of Wright's key messages is that the coming of Jesus into the world was a powerful signal to all that He is in charge **Now** and that the glimpses we gain of His glory and blessing in the **Now** will be overwhelmingly and victoriously fulfilled in Jesus's return and fulfilment of God's kingdom.

It's good to remember that God – our sovereign God - is in charge **Now** when so much in our world both domestically and globally seems to be going awry. And it's in knowing God is in charge that we have learnt so much as a Circuit over the last three years:

In our Lay work

In 2014 we did not know how we were going to find the resources to do mission through lay-work into the future. We struggled for a whole eighteen months not knowing where the funds would come from and facing a number of challenges and setbacks - we had to learn God's timing – and our prayers have been blessed. Eventually, through grants from the District and Joseph Rank together with individual church's fund raising God has said '**Now**' and enabled us to move forward with new posts:

- Royal Wootton Bassett and St Mary's, Purton – Youth Worker from 2015
- Christ the Servant Abbey Meads – New Pioneer Worker from 2017
- Highworth – after a time of reflection and prayer a New Church Mission Enabler from later 2017. Interviews will have taken place by the time this letter is published.
- Shrivenham – seeking the vision and God's blessing for a new Youth Worker from 2018. Watch this space and pray.
- We are ever indebted to our Circuit Administrators: Bob Mawer has served us faithfully and has now joined the Circuit Leadership Team. He has been ably succeeded by Carolyn Harmer whose increased hours reflect the growth in Circuit responsibilities devolved from Connexion.

Funding is assured for this work until 2020 and prayer is needed for God's guidance thereafter..... but I'm sure there is more to come.

Ecumenically

There is little doubt that in our LEP's throughout the Circuit and in the West Swindon and Lydiard Tregoze Partnership of churches in particular we have moved closer at God's bidding – and our

meetings together and times of corporate worship and shared study days across all churches, God has used to greatly bless and challenge us.

Our Bible Study days, prayer events like “Thy Kingdom Come” and our embryonic Gospel Choir have brought together members of many denominations and sometimes those who are seeking faith and so have helped in both discipleship and mission.

In our worship

The regular Circuit services in different locations have proved a time when God’s Spirit has moved and we can corporately draw closer to Him and put Him at the centre, **Now**.

Our individual churches are doing more to explore what it means to be ‘Church’ – and the variation of worship gatherings – from Café forum and Messy Church, to Food and Faith, Joint Public Issues forum and many different Prayer gatherings have been a refreshing reflection of God being in charge **Now**. We are learning from Him and from one another in these.

Leaders in Discipleship

How good it has been over the last three years to see many gifted and God-centred Leaders sharing with us their experience and understanding of God’s Word. Just reflect on those who have come to us and how we have been blessed:

Rev Dr. Knut Heim – Knowing God through the Psalms

Andy & Rhoda Fearon - Mission

Rev. Steve Wild - Peter’s first Letter

Rev. Dr. Chris Voke – Meeting God in Prayer

Stuart Townend – music ministry

Rev. Paul Wilson – Ezekiel – Revelation, Repentance, Resurrection and Renewal

Rev Graham Horsley – Fresh Expressions of Church

Let’s give thanks to God for these and look forward to Rev. Andrew Roberts who will lead us in our Holy Habits season in the Autumn.

The Future Challenge

What Now? We are about to begin a new 3 year chapter in the life of our Circuit. I am currently meeting with **Mike Ashford** who takes over as **Senior Circuit Steward** from September. Mike will bring many gifts to this role and to assist him the Circuit Meeting has approved an expanded leadership team from September.

Please pray for Mike as he prepares for this role and for the full leadership team of ministers and stewards as we share together in an Away Day at Cotswold Farm, Duntisbourne in mid- July – to pray, worship, to reflect and to plan for the future under the hand of God who is **Now**.

I would like to give my thanks to Keith, Rachael and David, all members of the Circuit Leadership Team and the Circuit Meeting for the way in which they have allowed God to use them over the last three years and to acknowledge how God’s love, spirit and grace has been the true enabling power, moving us forward with Him in the **Now**.

Andrew Fleet

Senior Circuit Steward

June 2017

NB Deadline for items for the June Newsletter is Monday 26th June

District News

You are all invited to apply for tickets to attend the Rededication/Thanksgiving Service at the New Room on Friday June 9th at 2pm. This will mark the opening of the Horsefair Project – the New Room’s new visitor centre. Please see attached leaflet for further information.

Rededication Service

of the
Horsefair Project on
Friday 9th June 2017 at 2.00pm

Also at 4.45pm in the Horsefair Room – “The Cradle of Methodism”

A talk by Gary Best about his new book, which is a history of the New Room and Methodism in Bristol between 1739 and 2017

7.45 – 9pm in the Chapel – “Wesley’s Bristol in Songs and Stories”

Songs and hymns from the 18th century performed by ‘Bristol Harmony’ accompanied by tales of Wesley’s Bristol from storyteller Ken Luxton

Pre-booked tours of the new facilities will be available and light refreshments will be served.

Tickets available on a first come first served basis from The New Room or
admin@newroombristol.org.uk

Circuit News/Events

Gospel Choir

The next rehearsal will take place on Saturday 17th June starting at 1pm for singers and continuing until 3pm at Christ the Servant Abbey Meads.

Bible Month

At the last Circuit Meeting it was agreed to set aside the month of June 2017 for the study of James. Material is available on the Methodist Church website www.methodist.org.uk/prayer-and-worship/bible-month

Church News

Cricklade

Café Theos talk by Martin Palmer

Our next speaker for Café Theos will be none other than Martin Palmer on Monday 12th June. Please take time to read the attached flyer about his talk and background. We are fortunate to get him as he is quite a globetrotter and he is in regular demand by the media. He has a history with our area and some of you may have known his father who was a vicar in Swindon. He is a very high profile figure so we would like to get as large an audience as possible. If you require more information then please contact Graham Stockill.

Garden Open for Charity

Cotswold Farm, Duntisbourne Abbots, Cirencester GL7 7JS are having a Garden Open Day for charity on Saturday 10th and Sunday 11th June 2-5pm. Adults £5, children free. The house is used as a Christian meeting centre and this year is the venue for the Circuit Leadership Team Away Day. For more information please see ngs.org.uk or the Cotswold Farm website.

Dates for your diary

Monday 12th June
Saturday 17th June
Monday 26th June

Martin Palmer at Cricklade 7.30pm
Gospel Choir rehearsal 1 – 3pm
Circuit Meeting at Longcot 7.30pm

Contact details (Upper Thames Circuit)

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