

A summary of what is happening in our Circuit....



Rose Hill Community Drop In

A series of workshops have been held on Monday afternoons at the *Community Drop In* at Rose Hill Methodist Church. They have been organised in conjunction with Age UK and led by tutors from Abingdon and Witney College. They have been well attended and have been a great opportunity for people to learn new skills whilst having fun and chatting to others.

Recent workshops have been:

- Staying Safe Online
- Making Christmas Wreaths
- Knitting
- Standing Yoga
- Drawing and painting

The *Community Drop In* is on every Monday from 2 - 4.30pm. and every week there are opportunities to chat, do jigsaws, play games whilst enjoying a hot drink and cake.

All are welcome to pop by - and there's no charge for the sessions. You will be assured of a very warm welcome.

Liz Spain



Let's End Poverty

Our national Joint Public Issues Team are part of the *Let's End Poverty* movement. It's a diverse movement of people and organisations who are united behind a vision for a UK where poverty can't keep anyone down. In the run up to the next General Election, *Let's End Poverty* are campaigning to get this on the political agenda. We need our political leaders to take urgent, coordinated action to break poverty's grip. In our Circuit, let's challenge candidates to say what they will do.

<https://letsendpoverty.co.uk>

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Isaiah 58.6 Paul Spray

Woodstock

Woodstock continue to progress through 'Our Church's Future Story' with assistance from the District Mission Team. We are now at the stage of collating community responses using a printed/on-line questionnaire and one-to-one interviews with key local stakeholders.

Our Church stonework has recently been professionally cleaned and our Rainbow, first introduced during the Covid Pandemic, is about to be relocated back above the entrance, reinforcing our unofficial moniker as "The Rainbow Church".

Our second Sunday of the month Local Arrangements continue, and the range of themes has been agreed through to December by our Worship Planning Group. A new weekly "Stillness, Silence and Simplicity" service has started on a Sunday evening, blending a simple service of evening prayer with periods of recorded music and quiet reflection.

<https://www.oxfordmethodists.org.uk/resources/worship/podcasts.html> (for recorded services)

A Turn-Up-and-Take-Part Nativity

Watlington held a *Turn-Up-and-Take-Part Nativity Service* on Christmas Eve with volunteers taking the parts. As a mere stand-by shepherd I was amazed the story was told unrehearsed, to time and was enjoyed by all, both participants and congregation. It made a wonderful start to Christmas by delivering the message that God has made us, God has come to us, and God is with us in 2024 and always. Phil Crockett



Dates for your Diary

9th June District Farwell for Helen Cameron at Wes Memorial at 3pm.

15th/16th June National Methodist Youth Band at Wes Memorial.

3rd August District Welcome for Rev Sonia Hicks, new Chair of District. Time and venue to be confirmed.

A new Lay Chaplain for Oxford Brookes University has been appointed. Her name is Adrienne Cook.

Conversations are continuing with each of the churches in the circuit as to their thoughts and plans for the future.

Kidlington

Last August, we started up Holiday @ Home again after the covid break. This is reaching out to those who do not belong to a church, and ran over three days with activities, entertainment and a cooked meal.

In January, we held a barn dance with Paul Carter and son Thomas taking to the floor, and Mel showing yet another skill at being the caller. We are holding another barn dance with a meal on April 20th. All are welcome but booking is essential. Details to follow.

John and Clare Winterbottom organised a very successful Quiz night at which all churches were represented. All monies were for our Transformation fund.

We look forward to meeting with the other Churches in Kidlington for our Walk of Witness and celebrating Pentecost in a Joint service at the Baptist Church.

The church is open on a Saturday morning, 10am to 12noon. All are welcome.



Bladon

Bladon Junior Church continues to meet every Sunday with at least 30 children attending each week. We are currently looking forward to all our Easter events, especially our traditional egg rolling event in Blenheim Park! We are also starting to plan and rehearse our programme of musical theatre songs for a concert *The Magic of the Musicals* on 16, 17 and 18 May. Keep up to date with all our news at www.juniorchurch.com or at facebook.com/BladonChurch.



Bladon is looking to move forward with phase two of its refurbishment programme which involves redeveloping the main worship area to make better use of the available space. We are currently consulting as widely as possible to help us draw up plans. Our aim is to have more space to allow us to cater for larger numbers of children for our shows and concerts whilst keeping the church suitable for worship and other events. If anyone around the circuit knows anyone who may be able to help advise us, then we would love to hear from them. email@juniorchurch.co.uk

News from the District

Naomi Ensor has just started in a new post of a Digital Enabler. Her job is to help circuits communicate better. She's already been in touch with Jo, our Circuit Administrator, and is planning training days.

As a start there's a new District website – do have a look at it:

<https://www.northamptonmethodistdistrict.org.uk>



Methodism nationally has a major push to create and find *New Places for New People*. Our District has picked this up by asking Revd Kim Shorley to expand a project called **FEAST**, where groups of people not used to church meet around an activity and share their thoughts and questions. Kim is now speaking to Superintendents, and local churches to map what groups (both formal and informal) already exist – for example bible doodling, walking groups, gardening, etc - and to offer the District Mission Team's help in facilitating ways in which faith sharing can be explored intentionally within this. Kim is keen to hear from any churches with ideas.

Rainbow House at Wesley Memorial

Rainbow House is a very happy place! On Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from morning to early afternoon, carers with children under five, come to socialise, play, eat, drink, and relax.

The children's café idea came to us from a group who had started a project but were looking for a better venue. Wesley Memorial liked the idea, built a new, quite small kitchen behind the Hall, renamed the enterprise Rainbow House, remembering Noah and his rainbow, and we opened up as a separate organisation. In 2016 we became a church project. Through all the decades the pattern has remained the same: a big play space with slide, lots of toys and books, healthy refreshments, a baby-changing area in the toilets, and a warm welcome. In recent years we have gained great popularity from Mel McCulloch's nursery rhyme sessions.

We had to close while some repairs or refurbishments have been done over the years, latterly the impressive upgrade of the Hall and the complete renewal of the kitchen behind. And of course Covid. We thought it would take years to build up our customer numbers again, but we find customers queueing to get in at opening time.

We are blessed to have Christine as our professional coordinator. She manages the whole project, including catering and volunteer staffing, and is always ready to welcome new volunteers.

If you felt you could offer a couple of hours now and then, please contact us at:

rainbowhouseox@gmail.com



Lime Walk

Like many other churches we joined together with our neighbouring churches to mark the Week of Prayer on Sunday 21st January. We were invited to All Saints Church in Headington along with members of the Oxford Chinese Christian Church. The OCCC worship on the premises of both Lime Walk and All Saints.

The Reverend Stephen Spain gave the sermon which was also translated into Cantonese (not by him).

Members of all the congregations were actively involved undertaking readings, prayers, playing music and singing. The most unexpected element of the service was being encouraged to sing in Cantonese. It was a joyful event enhanced by being able to socialise over a cup of coffee afterwards.

The Narrow Road

The circuit were pleased to host the touring production 'The Narrow Road' on Monday 4th March at Wesley Memorial. The theatre company, Riding Lights, are taking this passion play across the county throughout Lent this year. Around 125 people attended with a wide range of churches across the circuit, the city and beyond represented.

The four actors created a compelling drama of Christ's life and death which was interspersed with prayers and songs, which meant those attending were drawn fully into the story rather than just being observers of the events happening in front of them. The overall challenge was to consider when and how do we choose the narrow road - the difficult or challenging way - like Jesus did, rather than the wide road which is easy.

It was a thoughtful and inspiring way to spend an evening during Lent as we look towards Easter.



Volunteers Needed for 3Generate 2024

Five children from the circuit attended the 3Generate influencer day in the NEC in February. They were given the opportunity to share feedback on last year's 3Generate, to look at some of the ideas the planning team have come up with, and to help choose the picture which will be featured in the Methodist Art Collection's immersive art installation this year.

This year's 3Generate will take place at the NEC on 4th - 6th October. It would be great to take a Circuit group again. Tickets are available in April. 3Generate are hoping to recruit 25% more volunteers than last year to be part of the delivery team. Could this be something you or someone in your church could offer? You can find more info and how to apply at:

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/children-youth-family-ministry/events-including3generate/3generate/join-the-delivery-team/>

Congratulations to Sue Ann

Sue Ann Mak became a member at Wesley Memorial last year, on transfer from Singapore. She also led a memorable service, with Paul Spray. She has now moved to Aberdeen to be with her partner, but it was from Oxford that she candidated for Methodist ministry. We're delighted to say that she has been accepted.

Circuit staff Christmas Lunch



Local Preacher Accreditation Service

There will be a local preacher accreditation service for Sizwe Mkwanzani at Wesley Memorial Church on Sunday 26th May at 2pm. As Sizwe is in South Africa he will Zoom in from there and you can attend in person or on Zoom.

Here is the link:

<https://bit.ly/3III0Xu>



The Oxford Circuit seeks to appoint a PA, part-time, to support the work of two ministers and a community chaplain. The postholder will make a major contribution to efficient management of diaries, setting up of meetings, updating communications, and running of the Rose Hill Community Cupboard – so enabling Circuit staff better to proclaim the love of God.

Hours: 18 per week

Salary: £13,000 pa

Deadline: 3rd April 2024

For further details contact

hr@oxfordmethodists.org.uk.