

The Methodist Church



Bristol District

Upper Thames Circuit 7/23

Monthly newsletter April 2017



This month's opening letter has been written by Mr Mike Bathe, Circuit Treasurer

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the April 2017 Newsletter. As the Circuit Treasurer it is sometimes difficult to escape from the finances, taxes, pensions and other administrative responsibilities that seek to suck you in and distract you from your life as a Christian and in Matthew's Gospel (6:24) we are reminded that:

"No-one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money."

So as one who seeks to serve God rather than Money, there will be no mention of financial figures, budgets or spreadsheets, but rather a reflection arising from a radio interview I heard on St Patrick's day, when on Radio 4 Eddie Mair interviewed Sheriff Mark Napier of Pima County, Arizona. You can listen for yourself by going to: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p03m4q5s/episodes/downloads> The Sheriff does not mention God or Faith, but it seems to underpin all he says.

In the 1980s I lived for a year in the United States, in El Paso on the US – Mexican border, so it was with interest and some alarm I heard the call from Candidate, now President, Trump for the building of a wall along the entire length of that border. It was therefore a great relief to hear Sheriff Mark Napier, whose responsibilities include patrolling part of the US-Mexican border, talking about this idea of a wall with an authority and compassion lacking in the statements put out by Donald Trump. One point the Sheriff made was that every year his officers recover some 150 bodies from the desert near the border, the bodies of illegal immigrants who have died of thirst seeking a better life for themselves and their families in the United States. As someone familiar with the heat and desert of the border country, I could certainly appreciate the difficulties facing the immigrants once they crossed the border and their need for water to sustain their life.

But Jesus reminds us that there is more to life than quenching our thirst (John 4:13&14)

Jesus said to the woman at the well, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

So as we approach Easter and the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord Jesus, let us pray that the 'water of life' both real and spiritual will be freely available to all who seek God and a safer more secure life.

Mike Bathe

NB Deadline for items for the May Newsletter is Monday 24th April

District News

Diocese of Bristol



Who do you say I am?

Hope at Easter

Hope is helping churches to make Jesus known this Easter with a new book, short video and an explorers' course.

Find out more at www.hopetogether.org.uk

Circuit News/Events

Thy Kingdom Come



Thy Kingdom Come – 25th May to 4th June 2017

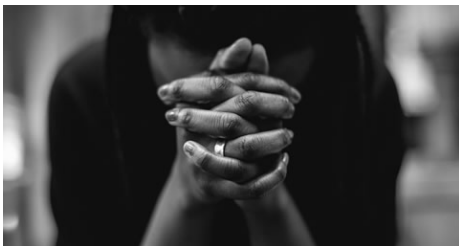
Join the global wave of prayer: Praying that people come to know Jesus Christ.

The Archbishop of Canterbury is inviting people around the world to join the movement, and The Methodist Church has become a partner in the initiative. The World Methodist Council is also encouraging Methodists across the world to take part.

The aim of Thy Kingdom Come is that Christians pray that people might know Jesus Christ during a focused time between Ascension and Pentecost 25th May – 4th June 2017.

The hope is that:

- People will commit to pray with God's world-wide family – as a church, individually or as a family
- Churches will hold prayer events, such as 24-7 prayer, prayer stations and prayer walks, across the UK and in other parts of the world
- People will be transformed through prayer by the Holy Spirit, finding new confidence to be witnesses for Jesus Christ



The Upper Thames Circuit are going to organise a rota so that prayer will be held every day somewhere in the Circuit throughout the 10 days. There will be further details in the next newsletter.

Circuit Services

Sunday April 23rd 6.00 at Royal Wootton Bassett

Sunday May 28th As a circuit, we have been invited to join with the West Swindon and Lydiard Tregoze Partnership for a picnic in Lydiard Park. An open air service will take place in the Walled Garden at 5.00pm. This was decided after the plan had been made so some churches may choose to continue with their evening service.

Gospel Choir

The next rehearsal for the Gospel Choir will be on Saturday 29th April 11am at Christ the Servant.

Bible Month

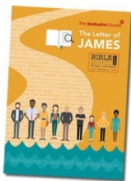


Upper Thames Methodist Circuit

BIBLE MONTH 2017

30 days with James

— #BibleMonth —



Join a concerted study in
our churches over 30 days:

Sunday 11th June
to **Sunday 2nd July**

We are planning to do something as a Circuit for 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

Sabbatical – Revd David Perkins

Dear Friends

Most of you will by now be aware that Revd Dave Perkins will begin his Sabbatical on 17th April. He will be dividing his time between Royal Wootton Bassett and Wales. It is therefore important that we make sure he is not disturbed at any time during this period. The Church at Royal Wootton Bassett have purchased a mobile phone (07719 868984) which is to be used for urgent matters for which you might normally contact the Minister. As for other matters, please contact either your Senior Steward or one of the other Circuit Ministers. You should not use the number at Dave's Manse at any time. I have copied two extracts from the letter which is sent to churches and ministers as they approach sabbatical which I think are worth sharing.

"A sabbatical is a gift from the Church to all presbyters and deacons and it is intended that during a sabbatical they will do something different which will inform and perhaps re-enthuse them in their ministry."

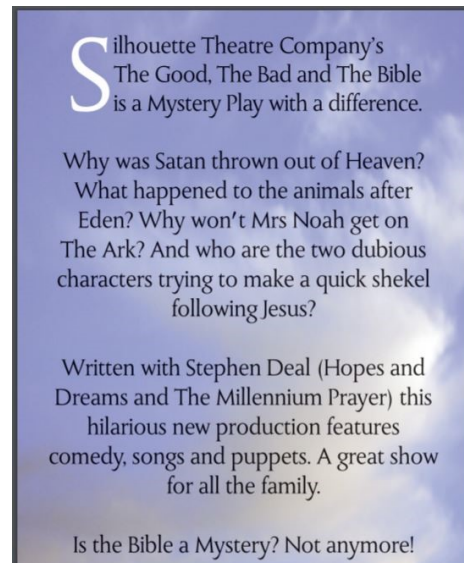
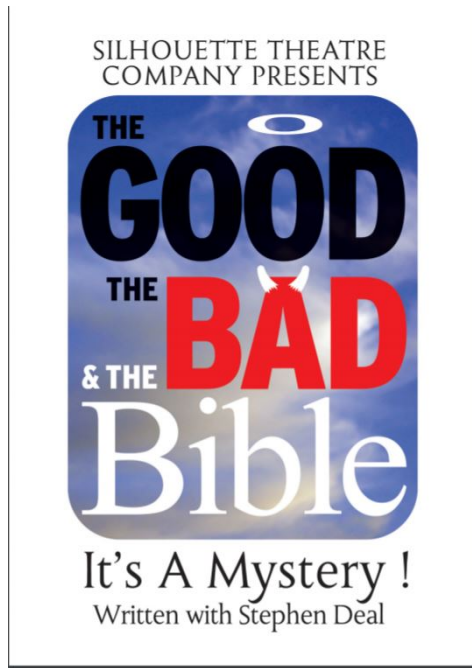
"On your return from sabbatical allow yourself some time to get back to the 'day job' – do not fill your diary immediately with appointments and meetings. It is easy to get re-immersed quickly but make sure you do not lose the benefit of your time away by reviewing and then carrying out the plans you made beforehand. It is often a good idea to plan a few days leave around a month after your return from sabbatical. Use the gift you have been given, and enjoy its benefits after you return."

On your behalf I would like to wish Dave and Chris well as they set out on this adventure, to assure them of our prayers. I would also like to assure the churches under Dave's Pastoral care that as a circuit we will do our best to ensure life continues as normally as possible.

God bless you all

Revd Keith Osborn

Silhouette Theatre Company – save the date!



Save the date! The Good the Bad and The Bible is coming to St. Alban's Watchfield On **Friday 19th May at 7pm**. Tickets are £5 for adults; thanks to a generous donation from the Methodist Forces Board young people go free! The play is aimed at adults and children aged 10+.

This is the same company who performed 'A twist in the tale' at Highworth at Christmas.

For more information or posters to advertise the event. Please contact: Emily Young
e: fwstalbins@gmail.com t: 07422 972943.

Church News

Highworth Methodist Church

Job Vacancy – Highworth Methodist Church will shortly be advertising for a Mission Enabler to start working with them from September 2017. Further details will be circulated separately over the coming week.

Saturday 20th May

Rev Graham Horsley is coming to Highworth Methodist Church to lead a day looking at 'Fresh Expressions' of the church. We would be delighted if friends from across the circuit would like to join us. Details including timescale will be sent out soon. Further details from Lou Ashford at louashford231@gmail.com
Please see flyer attached.

Royal Wootton Bassett

Our Minister Revd David Perkins will be taking a sabbatical from Monday 17th April to Monday 17th July.

During David's sabbatical his work will be covered, as well as we can, from both our church and the Circuit.

- Please pray that David's time with God will be refreshing and invigorating.
- Pray that David and Christine, with him for part of the time, can rest and make great memories together
- Pray that those charged with leading David's absence will be blessed.

Pentecost Praise – Sunday 4th June 10.30am at Royal Wootton Bassett Methodist Church. This will be a mix of hymns, songs modern and songs new plus a dramatised reading and a 1 minute (60 seconds) sermon (younger people will be able to join in with the Junior Church). Do feel free to join us, as all will be welcomed.

Braydon Methodist Church

Braydon Methodist Church invites you to an evening of musical entertainment with Geoff Walters and his 5 piece singing ensemble on Wednesday 17th May at 7.30pm at Royal Wootton Bassett Methodist Church. Geoff is well known in this area as accompanist to the Kentwood Choir for 40 years and as Chairman of Swindon Music Festival so it's no surprise that Encore bring us beautiful close knit harmonies that are a delight to listen to. Do come along and enjoy songs from the musicals and light opera as well as folk, sacred and popular songs. Tickets are £6 each and available from Anna Miles (01666 860794 or 07890929514). All proceeds are for the Braydon Methodist Church refurbishment fund.

Christ the Servant, Abbey Meads



Also, at Christ the Servant Church, Abbey Meads, you are invited to '**Open door Coffee and Chat**'. This will be held every week on **Monday between 1.00 – 3.00pm** – see attached poster.

West Swindon and Lydiard Tregoze Church Partnership

Roughshod Theatre are performing in Toothill Church on Thursday 4th May 7.30pm – see attached flyer. Tickets are required for this event, even though admission is free. Tickets are required for both adults and children. The event is only suitable for children over the age of 12 years.

Dates for your diary

Sunday 2nd April

Maundy Thursday 13th April

Good Friday 14th April

Good Friday 14th April

Risen – film at Shrivenham Methodist Church 7pm

Passover Shrivenham 7pm

Service at Shrivenham 9.30am (United)

Service at Highworth Methodist 12 noon (led by St Michaels's)

Good Friday 14th April
Saturday 15th April
Sunday 23rd April
Thursday 27th April
Saturday 29th April
Thursday 4th May
Wednesday 17th May
Friday 19th May
Saturday 20th May
Sunday 28th May
Sunday 4th June

Risen – film at Highworth 4.30pm
Highworth March of Witness 10am in Brewery Street car park
Circuit Service at Royal Wootton Bassett 6.00pm
Local Preachers & Worship Leaders meeting at Toothill 7.30pm
Gospel Choir rehearsal at Christ the Servant 11am
Roughshod Theatre at Toothill Church 7.30pm
Musical entertainment at Braydon 7.30pm
Theatre group at St Alban's, Watchfield 7pm
Graham Horsley weekend at Highworth
Circuit Service at Lydiard Tregoze
Pentecost Praise at Royal Wootton Bassett 10.30pm

Contact details (Upper Thames Circuit)

Office Hours
Telephone
Email
Email
Postal address

Monday & Wednesday 8.30 – 12 noon
01793 764544
upperthamescircuit@gmail.com
superkeithosborn@gmail.com
Highworth Methodist Church
Vicarage Lane
Highworth
Swindon
SN6 7AD