

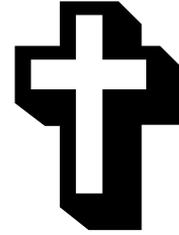
The Methodist Church – Bristol District

Upper Thames Circuit

Monthly Newsletter

No 27

March 2016



Dear Friends,

“Holy Habits,” and “A Circuit Shaped for Mission.”

I remember as a school boy being tickled by a joke about a laundry man sent to a convent to see if the nuns had any dirty habits. These days I am more interested in Holy Habits. A friend of mine, Andrew Roberts, has just produced a book with this title - a result of his sabbatical last year. It is all about discipleship, how we become one and how we make others. I commend it to you.

When Jesus began with twelve very mixed people from differing backgrounds, I am sure that folk around thought he had gone mad. Who in their right mind would choose fishermen and tax collectors to work alongside revolutionary fighters, even as he neared Gethsemane and Golgotha some three years later, they fell asleep and then fled, and Peter, who did stay close, went so far as to deny knowing Jesus.

That old Irish Joke about asking directions of a local who replied, “Well, I wouldn’t start from here,” comes to mind. The Upper Thames Circuit is really no different in its diversity from those early disciples. Nor are we different in our rawness and unprepared nature. We will and we do let our Saviour down, we fail him regularly in his hour of greatest need, but still he calls us, offering his wounds, not in rebuke, but in love. Isaiah 53:5 puts it like this:

“But he was pierced for our transgressions,
He was crushed for our iniquities;
The punishment that brought us peace was upon him,
And by his wounds we are healed.”

Even as we let him down and fail, he calls us in love. He calls us first into his loving presence and he calls us second to repentance. The son in Jesus’ parable was not called to grovel on his knees to his father, but was given his father’s robe to wear, to cover the filth and muck and signs of his rebellion. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world; rather, he sent him to save the world.

On Monday 14th March we will meet at The Church of Christ the Servant, Abbey Meads, for our Circuit Meeting and everyone is invited to join us. There will be twenty minutes of necessary business and then we will spend the rest of the time exploring how we can be an outward looking Circuit, the second of the “Marks of a healthy Circuit”. Do come along - there will be plenty of opportunities to share.

Of course all of this has its roots in the faith we share and in the focus of the next month; the suffering, death and resurrection of our Saviour Jesus Christ. I would like to encourage you in your journey with Jesus towards that cross, and to remind you that even as we often let him down, he is faithful to the end.

May God bless you this Lent and Easter.

Keith

NB: The deadline for items for the April newsletter is Tuesday, 22nd March.

DISTRICT NEWS/EVENTS:

RISE & SHINE : YOUNG LEADER'S WEEKEND

Organised by the Methodist Church's Youth President Craig Gaffney

The event will be looking at Biblical leadership and how that can be applied in the context of the 21st century. It is open to any young person aged between 16 and 23 who has been identified by their Churches, Circuits or Districts as having leadership potential. It will be a low key event to allow for depth in conversation and learning.

Cliff College Fri 24th – Sun 26th June £60

There might be scope for some district funding to help towards costs for young people from our district wanting to attend this event so please contact Emma Mills if interested. Also as always please ask churches if there is any chance of part funding too.

For full details and booking click here <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/rise-and-shine-tickets-20779344579>

NEWS FROM THE NEW ROOM

For the latest update from the New Room, please see the poster attached to the email to which this newsletter was attached.

IMPORTANT NOTICE!

Training in Youth Work organised by the District and taking place at Highworth Methodist Church

THE KEY

This training day on the 5th March is *CRUCIAL* for ALL those working with children and young people who have not attended any 'introduction to children's and youth work' training in the last 5 years. *Methodist Church Standing Orders suggest that engaging with this kind of training is mandatory along with the Safeguarding training.*

It's also a great opportunity to reflect on what you do, to meet other people in similar roles and have the chance to share stories with each other. It's fun and informative providing practical ideas and gives space for reflection and problem solving. If you have attended similar training many years ago (such as Spectrum or Kaleidoscope) then we still strongly encourage you to attend this as an essential refresher.

For further information please see the poster attached to the email to which this newsletter was attached.

The event will run from 10.00am until 4.00pm and costs just £5 per person - you might want to suggest that your church can help with this cost.

Please book by contacting Dan Jones (contact details on poster) or Emma Mills. Payment will be taken on the day. Emma's contact details are:

Youth Work Enabler
Bristol District of the Methodist Church
07989 496316
Emma.YouthWorkEnabler@virginmedia.com

Please don't hesitate to contact Emma if you have any further queries or just to let her know you are hoping to attend.

CIRCUIT NEWS/EVENTS:

An Evening with Stuart Townend

The Upper Thames Circuit is delighted to present the above event, which will take place in St Joseph's Catholic College, Ocotol Way, Swindon SN3 3LR on Tuesday, 19th April at 7.30pm. Tickets, priced at £15 for adults and £12 for children, are available now from the Rainbow Bookshop, Swindon and the Lighthouse Bookshop, Highworth. You can also buy tickets on-line by visiting: www.shrivenhammethodistchurch.co.uk. Tickets are selling fast and are limited, so please do book early to be sure of a seat. The evening will include performance, chat and worship with one of today's leading worship songwriters and will feature songs from the new album. Free refreshments will be available during the interval (donations appreciated) and merchandise will be available to purchase.

Cricklade United Church

Lent Talks

A series of six talks by high profile speakers (including Ann Widdecombe DSG, Major-General (Retired) Tim Cross CBE and Gary Grant, CEO of "The Entertainer" chain of toy shops) continues on Thursday 10th March with a talk by Ann Widdecombe DSG. Further details are contained in the poster attached to the email to which this newsletter was attached. ***For security reasons, please do not place this poster on any public web site.*** Admission will be by ticket only. Further information and free tickets are available for all events from Graham Light, telephone: (01793) 752671 (daytime) or 759181 (evenings) or email: lightg@hotmail.co.uk.

Shrivenham Methodist Church

Café Inspire

The next Café Inspire events will be held in the Shrivenham Primary School on Saturday, 12th March, 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. Advanced notice of the first Café Inspire service - which will take place at 4pm on Sunday 17th April, in Shrivenham Primary School. A worship band has been organised and this service will be suitable for all ages – do come along and support us if you can. If you cannot be there, please uphold this event in prayer.

Songs and Stories

The new Wednesday morning hour-long fun group for babies, toddlers and pre-school children and their parents/carers, which started Wednesday 6th January, has proved popular, with several now attending on a regular basis and new faces almost every week so far. There are nursery rhymes, action songs and stories for the children followed by a healthy snack, with some small toys to play with. Coffee and tea is available for the adults. Doors open at 8.45am and the session commences at approximately 9.05am, to cater for those dropping off older children elsewhere. There is no charge.

OTHER NEWS/EVENTS AND ITEMS OF INTEREST

Swindon Foodbank is looking for a Project Manager

For further information please see the advertisement attached to the email to which this newsletter was attached. The closing date for applications is 9th March.

Christian Vision for Men – The Gathering

The Gathering – an annual event which includes powerful gospel ministry, Bible teaching and a range of seminars, will be held over the week-end of 24th – 26th June at Lynt Farm, SN6 7QZ, off the main road between Highworth and Lechlade. Worship will be led by Graham Kendrick, Mark Tate and band. Speakers include Carl Beech, Nathan Blackaby, Roy Crowne and Mike Vickers. The cost is £95 per person until 31st May, then £100 per person. Bookings can be made online at: www.thegatheringformen.com or by calling the CVM Office on: 01246 452483. This event is usually sold out, so make sure you book in good time. Other attractions include comedy, sport, inflatables, music, cool cars and a bar. It is a great opportunity for Christian men to bring along their mates who don't go to church as well as those who do.

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

3 - 4 April 2016 'Healing the World - exploring the Environmental Crisis from Jewish and Christian Perspectives, led by Rabbi Natan Levy and Fiona Hulbert. We are very much looking forward to exploring the above subject in further detail, as the environment is very topical at present, one which affects us all and the generations to come. The environmental crisis is one of the biggest challenges of our time. A Jewish Rabbi and a Christian green activist sharing an interest in theology and ecology come together to help us rethink our prayer, theology and actions in response to a God who suffers for our sins against the earth. To help us look at this subject in greater detail Rabbi Natan Levy and Fiona Hulbert will be leading the way.

Please either go to <http://ammerdown.org/Healing-the-World-2016#> or email centre@ammerdown.org or ring 01761 433709.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

Saturday 5 th March	The Key – training for youth and children's work - Highworth Methodist Church, 10.00am – 4.00pm
Monday 14 th March	Circuit Meeting, Church of Christ the Servant, Abbey Meads, 7.30pm
Sunday 3 rd April	Circuit Service, Church of Christ the Servant, Abbey Meads, 6.30pm
Thursday 14 th April	Local Preachers and Worship Leaders Meeting Highworth Methodist Church, 7.30pm
Tuesday 19 th April	An evening with Stuart Townend, St Joseph's Catholic College, 7.30pm
Saturday 23 rd April	District Synod, North Wilts Circuit TBA

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 Circuit Office will closed at noon on Wednesday 23rd December and will re-open at 9.30am on Wednesday 6th January.

Telephone: (01793) 764544

Email: upperthamescircuit@gmail.com

Email: superkeithosborn@gmail.com

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Vicarage Lane
Highworth
Swindon SN6 7AD