

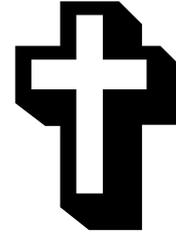
The Methodist Church – Bristol District

Upper Thames Circuit

Monthly Newsletter

No 29

May 2016



Dear Friends,

A car dealer in England was jailed after conning a Lake Windermere hotel out of £35,000. He had promised them a car which would float and take tourists for trips on the lake. Each model supplied sank as soon as it touched the water - no-one was injured thank goodness. "Not fit for purpose" NFFP was the judge's remark prior to sentencing.

The same description could be applied to the disciples prior to the resurrection. How on earth were they to be the ones to go into all the world with the message of the Kingdom? They had promised to die with Jesus, but instead they denied knowing him or had abandoned him at the moment of his deepest need. They had even begun to return to their old life – NFFP would be an apt description. The resurrection certainly changed their understanding of Jesus but it was the resurrection coupled with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that really turned them around and changed mission impossible into mission accomplished! If only they had taken on board the powerful priestly prayer of Jesus on the night before his death [see John 17] In this beautiful intercession for his friends [and us incidentally!] Jesus prays for them to be immersed in the love that the Father has for His Son. Jesus then prays to get that love into them. Knowing what they would do, and how fickle they could be, He truly loved them "to the end" and would not allow their failures in faith to determine the level of His grace and love. This is what empowered them for mission.

The times may have changed, the context of mission may have changed BUT it is the same Spirit who equips Gods people today by making us FIT FOR GODS PURPOSE in the world as Gods love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given unto us [romans 5v5]

Happy Church birthday!!!,
HAPPY PENTECOST
David

NB: The deadline for items for the June newsletter is Friday, 20th May

DISTRICT AND CONNEXION 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>

CIRCUIT NEWS/EVENTS:

Flame FM

Flame FM will be broadcasting on 87.7 FM from 1st – 28th May. Here is some feedback from the launch:

Thanks to those who came along to the launch today and to those who listened in.

Hope you continue to enjoy listening to Flame. At the moment, having not long got home we're going to have a cup of tea and enjoy a bit of quality time listening to our Community Radio with a Christian flavour!

Please do look at the Flame FM web site:

www.flamefm.co.uk

Please keep praying for the success of Flame, the witness it will be and the challenges it will bring.

James Osborn is one of the many people involved. He will be hosting a late night programme on Saturdays.

Further details of the programmes are attached to the email to which this newsletter was attached.

An Evening with Stuart Townend

A wonderful evening it was too! A big "Thank you" to all who supported it and to all who helped in any way. Also, a huge "Thank-you" to Wendy Smith, without whom the event would not have taken place. Hope you are now enjoying the CDs.

Proposed Circuit trip to Oberammergau in 2020

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

Destiny Africa

In June we shall receive a visit from the Kampala Children's Centre in Uganda. They are touring Europe and will be performing song, dance and traditional drumming at Lydiard Park Academy at 7.00pm on Wednesday 29th June. Tickets are priced at £6.00 for adults and £4.00 for children (aged 2-18) and are available from www.destinyafricawiltshire.com. For further information, please see the small or large poster attached to the email to which this newsletter was attached.

Braydon Methodist Church

Advance Notice of Camp Service at Braydon

There will be a Camp Service at Braydon on Sunday 18th September. Gates will open at 12.30pm for a hog roast, followed by a service at 2.30pm. Watch this space for further updates as the date approaches.

Cricklade United Church

Café Theos

There will be Café Theos events in May and June.

On Monday 16th May Rev Samuel McBratney will be speaking on the subject, "Do Love and Marriage really go together? Sex, Relationships and the Modern Christian."

On Monday 13th June Rev Dr John Emmett will be speaking in the subject, "Modern Physics and God: Models, Matrices, Metaphors and Myths" in an exploration of how relativity and quantum mechanics can affect the dialogue between science and religion.

Both events will be held in the Cricklade United Church at 7.30pm, with refreshments available from 7.00pm.

Café Theos is an idea to create a space where anyone can come to explore the depths of theology and listen to theologians and inspirational speakers. Café Theos is a forum for debating theological and faith issues in an informal and accessible way, open to all. Café audiences are people who are interested in theology. Anyone can participate; speakers are there to be questioned. Café Theos will start with a talk by the speaker, after which there will be opportunity for refreshments, conversation, questions and answers.

Shrivenham Methodist Church

Café Inspire

The next Café Inspire events will be held in the Shrivenham Primary School on Saturday, 14th May, 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. The first Sunday afternoon Café Inspire service took place on Sunday 17th April, in Shrivenham Primary School. It was very well attended and the worship band was great. A big "Thank-you" to all who helped by baking, serving, preparing, clearing up and taking part. Feedback is being considered by the team in order to build on this experience and make the next one even better! Please uphold Café Inspire in prayer.

OTHER NEWS/EVENTS AND ITEMS OF INTEREST

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

These are the courses and retreats that will be taking place over the next couple of months:

May 2016

23-27 May – Ammerdown Summer Break led by Sue Harbert This week is especially designed for senior citizens looking for a break in lovely surroundings and good company. A programme that offers something for everyone: a mixture of crafts, an outing, talks, films and entertainment, together with religious services for those who wish to take part. For further information or to book a place go to www.ammerdown.org , ring 01761 433709 or email centre@ammerdown.org

28 – 30 May – Understanding Islam led by Dr Chris Hewer. A good understanding of Islam is a must in Britain today, where Muslims number by far the biggest religious group after British Christians. In many of our major towns and cities, they make up a substantial minority of the population. This constitutes an invitation to everyone to get to know Islam and Muslims better and to explore ways of building bridges of mutual respect and understanding. This particularly applies to those involved with Muslims as neighbours, friends, workplace acquaintances, or clients in the caring professions. For further information or to book a place go to www.ammerdown.org , ring 01761 433709 or email centre@ammerdown.org

June 2016

3 June Quiet Day- Finding a Spacious place - Ammerdown Guided Quiet Days offer an opportunity to take time out from our busy lives to pray, reflect and meditate in the Christian tradition with the help of Libby Dobson and Sarah Chabowska. They invite you to travel with God on a journey of discovery. The theme for this year will be 'Journey of the Heart - Finding a Spacious Place'. Each day stands on its own or together they create a journey throughout the year. For further information or to book a place go to www.ammerdown.org , ring 01761 433709 or email centre@ammerdown.org

3 -5 June The Inn at the Crossroads led by Margaret Silf. She is inviting you to join her on a journey – a journey to Emmaus. She writes: *“After Jesus’ death, two disconsolate friends walk along the road to Emmaus, feeling disappointed and bewildered. They are joined by the risen, though still unrecognised, Jesus, who tells them their own story in a new way. When they reach the crossroads they persuade him to have supper with them at the inn. What happens next will change their whole view of themselves.* For further information or to book a place go to www.ammerdown.org , ring 01761 433709 or email centre@ammerdown.org

17 – 19 June Exploring the Spiritual Path with Dante and His Divine Comedy led by Kim Nataraja. Kim writes: *“Dante in his 'Divine Comedy' depicts poetically the spiritual journey. Much of what he describes so beautifully resonates with our own experience on the path to becoming fully alive and awake. His emphasis right from the beginning is on helping us to become aware of what motivates us and what blocks us on the way to reconnecting with the spiritual part of our being. Both 'mindfulness' and contemplative prayer go hand in hand in his poem. During this weekend we will explore his teaching and reflect on its meaning for us personally, with the experience of silence and stillness of meditation supporting the process.”* For further information or to book a place go to www.ammerdown.org , ring 01761 433709 or email centre@ammerdown.org

18 June Mindfulness and Felt making led by Myra Ettridge and Sue Glanville Make your own piece of felt and learn to be mindful in the process. All instructions and materials provided. Beginners welcome. For further information or to book a place go to www.ammerdown.org , ring 01761 433709 or email centre@ammerdown.org

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

Saturday 14 th May	District Safeguarding Leadership Training in Chippenham 10.00am – 4.00pm
Saturday 14 th May	Café Inspire, Shrivenham Primary School from 10.00am to 11.30am
Monday 16 th May	Café Theos at Cricklade United Church, 7.00m for 7.30pm
Monday 6 th June	Circuit Leadership Team Meeting, 13 Charlbury Road, Shrivenham 7.30pm
Monday 20 th June	Circuit Meeting, Braydon 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:

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