



The Methodist Church

Bristol District

Upper Thames Circuit 7/23

Monthly newsletter February 2017

This month's opening letter has been written by Mrs Jane Phoenix-Stone, Circuit Steward and Senior Steward at Royal Wootton Bassett, and is entitled 'Mum'.

Dear friends,

Have you heard the saying 'speaking from beyond the grave?' Well I feel my mother-in-law, whose funeral celebration I attended very early in the New Year, did exactly that. She spoke to friends and family alike, young and old, whether disciples or not. For Margaret/Mum, married to Ray for 65 years attending the same 'chapel' throughout her marriage, words have always been important. She loved reading and wrote poetry.

Margaret, 87, had left a few notes about ideas she would like expressed at the church service held prior to her committal at the crematorium. This included some hymns/songs. Using these as a framework, the Deacon and her sons felt assured to also include Psalm 91, used in sections at both venues.

As her funeral unfolded words and lyrics told of a steadfast lifelong trust in God. The introduction, verses of the Psalm

- 1) Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.
- 2) I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."

Deacon Mark spoke of how he'd come to know of an inner sanctuary of peace within Margaret reflected in the first song: The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want not the traditional tune but the Getty/Townend version with the refrain she loved.

And I will trust in you alone, And I will trust in you alone, For your endless mercy follows me, Your goodness will lead me home.

We heard how Margaret prayed daily and Ray had said "if ever there was an issue, Mum would take herself off and pray about it."

In the final song suggested by Margaret she held a mirror up to our own faith and social conscience.

(STF 662) Have you heard God's voice; has your heart been stirred? You may like to read the whole song but here are the words of the last verse and part of the chorus.

Will you watch the news with the eyes of faith and believe it could be different? Will you share your views using words of grace? Will you leave a thoughtful imprint?

.....Will you trust in One who entrusts to you the disciples of tomorrow?

Every blessing

Jane Phoenix-Stone

NB: The deadline for items for the March newsletter is Tuesday 21st February.

District and Connexion News/Events

Notes from Emma Mills (District Youth Enabler)

INFORMATION FOR THOSE NEW TO YOUTH WORK OR YOUTH WORKERS NEW TO THE DISTRICT*

I have recently met with someone who is setting up a youth group for the first time.

After a long discussion where I provided a huge amount of crucial information, it was clear that a document containing all of that info would be really useful for anyone who is considering setting up a youth project for the first time and/or who is new to the District.

PLEASE SAVE THIS DOCUMENT SO YOU CAN GIVE IT TO ANY NEW YOUTH WORKERS (EMPLOYED OR VOLUNTARY)

and always encourage them to get in touch with me to arrange to meet up.

I have also attached the checklist created several years ago (which will be updated sometime this year). I haven't included any of the other attachments which are listed in the document but please feel free to ask me to email them to you as appropriate.

I WOULD ALSO ENCOURAGE ANY CURRENT YOUTH WORKERS TO READ THROUGH THIS DOCUMENT IN CASE ANY OF THE INFORMATION IS NEW TO YOU 😊

(Please see attachments at the end of this newsletter)

JOB ADVERT

The Ark Bus Project are looking for 2 new Community Workers.

Could it be you or do you know someone who would relish an exciting opportunity?

Please see full details by clicking on this link. Closing date 9th February.

<https://www.charityjob.co.uk/jobs/part-time-community-worker/487022?tsId=8>

Explore Together

I would like to invite you and anyone in your church to a free event Scripture Union are running at Muller House Bristol on Monday 6th February at 10am or 7.30pm. Explore Together is a great programme for All Age services for Sundays or mid-week. Lianne Smith from Scripture Union will be showing us how the programme works and you will have a chance to participate to experience the programme for yourself. Please see the attached leaflet and for more details of the programme please visit www.exploretogether.org

To give us an idea of numbers please book at:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/explore-together-tour-tickets-29674722895>

(Please see attachment on email)

Jump (District Youth Event)

There are only a few days left to book onto the Jump District Youth Event to be held on 4th March 2017. Please contact Emma by Facebook, text or email to let her know if you have put bookings into the post.

Circuit News/Events

Gospel Choir

Gospel Workshop

With Jim Eddings

At Christ the Servant, Abbey Meads

SN25 4YX

Saturday 25th February 11.00 – 4.00pm

As a part of the Circuit discussion in 2016 towards being 'outward looking', some raised the vision of developing a Gospel Choir. We have had discussions with North Wilts Circuit who are keen to join us in this venture.

After much prayer we were led to Jim Eddings, a talented musician who loves the Lord. He has agreed and is excited about exploring with us the potential of a Gospel choir.

In February Jim will visit Highworth, Royal Wootton Bassett and Cricklade churches during their morning worship to talk about the choir and encourage interest. He may well contribute to the worship with some 'gospel' on these occasions.

We invite folk who are interested in being a part of this exciting venture from all our churches and from other denominations to come to a Workshop on Saturday 25th February 2017 at Christ the Servant, Abbey Meads from 11.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. The workshop is at no cost – drinks will be provided for the day and participants are invited to bring their own packed lunches.

Children are welcome but under 13s must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

A love of music and enthusiasm - but no particular expertise - required!!

The Gathering 2017

Bookings are now being taken for The Gathering (Christian Vision for Men) to be held 23rd – 25th June 2017. The comedian, Tim Vine, will be in attendance this year alongside Graham Kendrick and many other well-known names. (Please see the attached poster)

Church News

Highworth Methodist Church

Sunday 5th February 2017

The evening service is going to be a very special occasion as Keith will be 'blessing/dedicating' the newly lit cross and the refurbished steeple in memory of Marjorie Perrett and Stanley Ball. This will form the opening of our evening worship. We will then continue with the rest of the service indoors. (If it's raining, the blessing/dedication will also take place indoors)

Members of both of their families will be there and, as some are travelling quite a distance to be there, we thought it would be appropriate to have a 'bring and share' tea beforehand at 5pm. (please keep it simple, sandwiches and cakes only)



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

Shrivenham Methodist Church

Café Inspire will be holding two events in February to which you are all invited. On Saturday 11th February from 10 to 11.30am we will be open as usual in Shrivenham Primary School. As usual we will be offering our guests our mix of refreshments, friendship and news for adults and games and crafts for children. There will also be a short talk on a Christian topic. We regularly get over 60 people in attendance and you would be assured of a warm welcome, so why not come along and experience our own blend of friendship and outreach.

On Sunday 26th February at 4pm, again in Shrivenham Primary School, we will be holding our second Teatime Celebratory Service. This will take the form of a short (1/2 hour) service of praise featuring worship songs, prayer, bible reading and talk (performed by our own double act of Rev Keith Osborn and Rev Richard Hancock, the vicar of Shrivenham) all followed by tea and cakes. We are hoping that our songs will be led again by a group from Shrivenham augmented by some of the Highworth Worship Band. Please feel free to come and help us Praise our Lord.

Sunday 5th February at 3pm

There will be a United Service in Longcot Chapel to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the re-dedication of Longcot Chapel. Why not come and help us celebrate? Tea will be served after the service which will be led by Emily Young. More information from Stella on 01793 782584.

Epiphany

Epiphany – but not as we know it! “Epiphany” is the collective name for a group of highly talented professional musicians, all of whom play with well-known groups and orchestras and who come together from time to time to tour and perform, both nationally and internationally. We are privileged to welcome them to Shrivenham (Watchfield) for the week-end of 4th & 5th February, when they will be giving a concert on Saturday evening in St Alban’s Church, Watchfield at 7.30pm and leading worship at the morning service on Sunday 5th at St Alban’s Church. Tickets for the concert are just £5 each and include a glass of wine. This is an ideal event to which you could invite your non-Christian friend and music-lover. The “Sound Portraits” in part two of the concert are improvised arrangements specially tailored for individual volunteers (no pressure at all) and, having witnessed Epiphany first-hand, I can highly recommend the evening. If you are able to offer accommodation to any of the members of Epiphany on the Saturday night, please let Bob Mawer know. Further details and tickets are available from Bob Mawer (tel: 07973 163337, email: robert.mawer@which.net) The Epiphany website also contains further information about Epiphany and details of the Shrivenham event: www.epiphanymusic.org.uk

West Swindon and Lydiard Tregoze Church Partnership

A short course of 6 sessions is starting at Holy Trinity Shaw on Sunday 26th February at 4pm. The course is entitled Faith Pictures and is designed to help Christians talk naturally to friends, neighbours and colleagues about what they believe. For further details, please contact the partnership office at westpartnershipoffice@gmail.com

Dates for your diary

Saturday 4th February	Epiphany Concert, St Alban’s Church, Watchfield 7.30pm
Sunday 5th February	United Service at Longcot 3pm – 20th Anniversary of chapel
Sunday 5th February	Dedication/blessing of cross at Highworth Methodist Church
Saturday 11th February	Café Inspire, Shrivenham Primary School 10am
Tuesday 21st February	Deadline for items for March newsletter
Saturday 25th February	Gospel Choir Workshop
Saturday 25th February	Kentwood Show Choir
Sunday 26th February	Teatime Celebratory Service, Shrivenham Primary School 4pm
Sunday 26th February	Faith Pictures 4pm at Holy Trinity Shaw
Thursday 16th March	Circuit Meeting at Shrivenham Methodist Church
Sunday 23rd April	Circuit Service at Royal Wootton Bassett 6.30pm
Thursday 27th April	Local Preachers & Worship Leaders meeting at Toothill 7.30pm
Saturday 20th May	Graham Horsley weekend at Highworth

Contact details (Upper Thames Circuit)

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