

BIDEFORD METHODIST CIRCUIT MONTHLY NEWSLETTER March 2010 - Issue 95

Welcome to Edition Number 95

Please note my e-mail address bucklanddave@btinternet.com

Please continue to send details of future events, activities or 'anything', you wish to share with the Circuit to Dave Watson by e-mail; phone 01237 451437 or to 6 Greenings Road, Buckland Brewer, Bideford, EX39 5LU. Please send them before the 20th of each month if possible.

It has been decided that the Circuit Newsletter will now be free & therefore could you please urge you to 'dish them out' to as many people as possible. If this means more are needed by each church, then please let me know.

Thanks - Dave Watson

From the Superintendent Minister – Rev David Morris

Dear Friends,

At last the weather seems to be getting better. As I write, the sun is shining; it's really quite warm as long as you keep moving and don't get in to the shade. There's a general sense of improvement and well-being in the air. This is quite at odds with what's going on in the wider world: the casualties continue to mount in Iraq and Afghanistan, there have been floods and landslides in Madeira and the after effects of the earthquake continue to cause misery in Haiti. But none of these things is here with me now as I write and none impinges directly on me, however much I may empathise with those affected. None of it detracts from the beauty of this day in this part of North Devon.

There is an essential paradox in our experience of the world and of God. We know that every day, whether we know anything about them or not, countless tragedies befall countless people. Similarly, unknown and unnumbered blessings fall to countless other people. These things make up the life of the world in which we share and as John Donne told us, 'no man is an island'; these things affect us, however indirectly, because they affect the world in which we live. But our immediate experience is almost entirely limited to what happens to us personally and individually. We can never fully share anyone else's experience, no matter how close we are to them and no matter how much we love them or care for them. So while we are part of the world and while it is true that what we share with the world is partly what we bring to it, yet we are still in this sense perfectly alone.

Similar considerations apply to our Christian faith and are particularly pertinent as we go through Lent. As Christians, we are used to referring to ourselves as the body of Christ. We think of ourselves collectively as the people of God. We acknowledge gladly our life as

a community of faith, caring for and depending on each other. Yet the community of faith has to be made up of individual people of faith. If we are all to love and serve God as a community, each of us has to know and love God for ourselves. I cannot love God for you and you cannot love God for me. So while we are part of the people of God and our sense of belonging is part of what we bring to the people of God, yet we are in this sense also perfectly alone.

That's why we have to be grateful for beautiful days despite knowing that dreadful things are going on in the world around us. If we are to bring our individual love of God to be part of the strength of the people of God, we have first to be willing to receive God's blessings in our individual lives as they fall to us. We have to charge up our batteries on whatever power God sends us so that we are able to use it in the seemingly powerless times. As Christian people we believe that God is active in the world, that he cares about what goes on here and that, while he can't stop all the bad things happening, he is at work in the responses of his people to events and their aftermath. If we are to represent him faithfully in the world we have to accept what he gives us to use as best we can. The good days in amongst everyone else's difficulties are the seeds of the strength we will need later on.

This is particularly important for us to remember at Lent when we examine our discipleship and think about our relationship with God. The seeds of Easter are sown in Lent. We need to be grateful for the good days among the dark times.

May God bless us all - David

Visit of new Chair of District

On Sunday March 14th Rev Pete Pillinger, who took over as Chair of the Plymouth and Exeter District last September, will be preaching at High St Bideford. This is the first chance we have had to host the new Chair. He has offered to give us most of the day so the plan is to hold the morning service followed by a Bring and Share lunch followed by a Meet the Chair/Question and Answer session at which Pete can say something about his ideas for the District and we can ask our questions. Most of our churches have decided not to hold their own services on that morning but to come in to High St to take part in this opportunity; it is mainly only the churches which have unavoidable commitments locally that will be open that morning. Please encourage as many folk as possible to come to High St on 14th March, bring your lunch contributions and stay on for the afternoon session. Many of you have heard from me at second hand about the Chair's thinking for the future of the district as it affects this circuit; this is the chance to hear it directly. Please come along and make the day a success.

David Morris

The next Circuit Meeting is at Alverdiscott on Thursday March 18th at 7-30pm.

Les Price, Circuit Meeting secretary.

Alwington Methodist Church

Our next COFFEE MORNING will be held at ALWINGTON VILLAGE HALL on TUESDAY MARCH 2nd, 10.30AM TO 12Noon, coffee& biscuits £1- Home-made cakes, bring & buy, draw. Toasted teacakes - All proceeds for the Methodist Home & Overseas Missions.

In April we meet at Alwington Methodist Church on Tuesday 6th.

CHANGE OF DATE.

Due to unforeseen circumstances the concert by Peter Bolt will now be held at Alwington Methodist Church on Sunday May 2nd. We are sorry if this inconveniences anyone. More details next month.

A very warm welcome at all these events.

Bideford Circuit Prayer and Praise

The next Prayer & Praise will be on Thursday 4th March at Littleham at 7.30pm

April Maundy Thursday
May 6th Alverdiscott
June 3rd Alwington
July 1st Buckland
August None
Sept 2nd Bideford
October 7th Torrington
November 4th Parkham
December None

Torrington Methodist Church

The next 'Inspire' Youth Services will take place on Sunday 28th February & Sunday 28th March at 7pm at Torrington Chapel. All welcome.

There will be a series of Coffee Mornings held at Torrington Methodist Church from 10am – noon starting on Saturday March 6th with proceeds for the Church Repair Fund. Bring & Buy cakes, plants & produce. Come along for a chat.

Others will be held also on Saturdays on 3rd April; 8th May; 5th June; 3rd July; 7th August & 4th September

Women's World Day of Prayer service will be held at Torrington on Friday 5th March at 2.30pm. All are welcome to join us for this service of prayer and praise prepared by the Christian women in Cameroon. "This is always an exciting day as a great wave of prayer sweeps the world, beginning when the first service is held in the Queen Salote Girl's School in Tonga and continuing around the world until the final service takes place some

35 hours later, in neighbouring western Samoa. By then the day will have been celebrated in over 170 countries and over 5000 services will have been held in Great Britain". Come join in the celebrations with us.

Cafè Church is coming to Torrington. Sunday March 7th starting at 4pm and including a bring and share tea.

Sunday March 14th - A special Mothering Sunday Songs of Praise here at Torrington at 6.30pm. You are invited to choose your favourite hymns, readings, poems or stories and place them in the request box in the welcome area so that we can have a service of celebration for Mother's Day with lots of friends taking part.

Littleham Methodist Church

Coffee Morning on Wednesday 10th March 10 -30 to 12 noon. Proceeds this month for Shelter Box. A warm welcome to you all.

Looking forward to April, we will be celebrating our Church Anniversary on Saturday 17th April when we hope to have something a little bit different, so look out for more information in the April Newsletter.

Alverdiscott Methodist Church

Thank you to those of you from the Circuit who came to our first Coffee Morning. We were very pleased with the numbers who came and some lively discussions took place around the various tables. As a result of your generosity we were able to send £75.51 to Devon Air Ambulance. We look forward to seeing you at next Coffee Morning

Coffee Morning Thursday 4th March 10.00 am – 12 noon in aid of Shelter Box. A representative from Shelterbox will be present to answer any questions.

Concert by the Stowford Meadow Singers is on Sunday 11th April not 21st March as stated in the plan and last month's newsletter. This will take place at Alverdiscott at 8.00 pm. All welcome.

Mission Evening at Alverdiscott at 7.30 pm on Friday 26th March, The Street Pastors Initiative a talk and demonstration on the work and success so far. Bring and Buy Stall, Refreshments.

It's Church, Jim, but not as we know it. Café style worship will take place at Alverdiscott at 5.00 pm on Sunday 21st March and Sunday 23rd May led by our Minister Graham Slingo. Come and enjoy worship with a difference and have your tea. Suitable for children.

Buckland Brewer Methodist Church

The Circuit Easter Offering Service will be held on Sunday 18th April at Buckland Brewer with tea at 5.30pm and the Service at 6.30pm.

The Women's World Day of Prayer Service will take place on Friday 5th March at 7.30pm at Buckland Brewer Chapel

There will be a Sankey Evening at Buckland with the Newton St Petrock Male Voice Choir on Sunday 22nd August at 7pm. Refreshments to follow – All are welcome

Clovelly Methodist Church

Prayer Card Ministry

For more details please contact Roy Harris 01805 623 043.

Northam Methodist Church

Northam Church Council has decided to suspend Sunday evening services from the end of February.

From Sunday, 7th March, Fellowship Meetings will be held in the Hall at 6-00pm each Sunday and all are welcome to attend.

Thanks - Les Price, Council Secretary

Northam Methodist Church are hosting a "Spring Concert" by the "Appledore Singers" and Chris on the Organ on Sunday 21st March @ 3pm. This will be followed by an afternoon tea. Cost £3-00.

Please ring Marjorie on 01237 477292 or Les/Brenda on 01237 470553, or contact any Northam Church Member, to book in advance so that we can cater for everyone.

The Bright Stars Theatre Group

If anyone is thinking of throwing out any old sheets (doesn't matter what size or colour, as long as they are plain) please could you let me know on 01237 421956. We turn any old sheets into wonderful 'Back Drops' for our productions. We have now come to the end of our supply and are eager to get hold of some more, for future productions. S please help us by passing the word around.

As you probably know, all our profits go to different charities, so you would be helping us immensely. – Maggie Smith

The Thursday Fellowship place every week and are followed by Tea & Cakes at 2.30pm. Admission £1

Parkham Methodist Church Ladies Club

Meeting at 2.30pm in Sunday School Rooms at Parkham Chapel

Wednesday 3rd March – Peter Christie 'Folk Lore of North Devon' – Charity Stall for Heartswell Lodge

Wednesday 7th April – Mrs Debra Montague – 'Care & repair'

Suffering Church

The Suffering church prayer groups, who are praying for Christians around the world who put their faith in Jesus Christ and because of this suffer persecution. All meetings are at the Torrington Manse from 7.30pm and are Friday 26th March and Friday 30th April. We will listen to a prayer C.D. and finish the evening with fellowship and biscuits.

'Mamitus Fund'

Rosemary Quinell & Pat Raymond have closed the small Mercy Ships Charity which was called the Mamitus Fund. It was started when the plight of women who had fistula problems in Sierra Leone following childbirth was brought to our notice.

Thanks to the generosity & hard work of many people in our churches & circuit, just over £2000 was raised, allowing 20 women to be operated on & healed.

We tried to find someone who would carry on with the work but sadly without success.

Both Pat & Rosemary would like to thank all the wonderful people who supported & helped us with the project.

Circuit Mission – Elsie Potter

The Circuit Network and Mission Committee meet on Tuesday 16 March at 7.30 pm at Alwington.

The Circuit Mission Focus Group meets on Monday 29 March at 2.30 pm at the home of Elsie Potter. Webbery Cross Cottage. Please telephone me for more information 01271 858534.

Both of these meetings are open to anyone interested and with a heart for Mission. The focus group has been developing a Circuit Mission Strategy, come and hear more about this at the Network and Mission Committee and at Circuit Meeting.

I came across this recently in a book I had given to me for Christmas "The Power of a Praying Woman" by Stormie Omartian "Confession gets sin out in the open before God. When you confess your sin, you're not informing God of something He Doesn't know. He already knows. He wants to know that you know.

Elsie

Local Preachers

Local Preachers Quiet Day is planned to be held on Saturday 12th June 2010 at Lee Abbey. Cost to be £15 to include lunch & an afternoon tea/coffee. More details later in year.

Local Preachers Meetings to be held on Thursday 22nd April at Buckland Brewer at 7.30pm & on Thursday 15th July at High Street, Bideford at 7.30pm

Local Preachers Support Group Monday 8th March at Webbery Cross Cottage (Elsie's), Thursday March 25th at 10 Yeo Drive Appledore (Julia's).

Christians Together - From Julia Spencer

Devon Churches Forum - Wednesday 12 May at 7.30 pm at Fairplace United Church, Okehampton - Speaker: Captain Viv Prescott, Salvation Army

This meeting is open to all and aims to inspire and enthuse Christians working and worshipping together in Devon's towns, villages and cities. Tea and coffee will be served from 6.45 pm. Fairplace United Church is in the centre of Okehampton opposite the Post Office.

Appledore Bible Study and Prayer Group

We are a small warm group who enjoy sharing together. We meet on a Thursday mornings 9.45 am for 10am starting with Coffee or tea and we aim to finish at 11am.

We are at the moment Studying Luke New Hope, New Joy

LENT: From 25th February we are to be following the YORK Course
WHEN I SURVEY..... 5 Sessions

1. Darkness at Noon
2. Into Great Silence
3. The Child on the Cross
4. Outside a City Wall
5. Touching the Rock.

LWPT – Leaders of Worship & Preachers Trust

On Saturday 13th March we are having a time of fellowship from 2pm to 4pm in Wonford Methodist Church. Mr. Roger Steer the Ringash Circuit Local Preacher Tutor will speak to us with an opportunity for input, followed by a short Rededication Service for LP's, Worship Leaders etc., and informal Holy Communion. We will then have fellowship over a Bring and Share tea.

Action for Children

Northam Methodist Church raised £553-26 for "Action For Children" between Sept. 08 and Sept.09

If any church would like to send me how much they have raised over the past year, please send me the information – Dave Watson

District Local Preachers Refresher Day on Saturday 6th March from 10am till 4pm at Wonford Methodist Church. – Contact Steve Jones District Training Officer on 01392 662735 – steve.jones@methodist.org.uk

NATIONAL BBC RADIO APPEAL WILL BENEFIT COUNTRYSIDE PEOPLE

On Sunday 7 March BBC Radio 4 will broadcast an appeal to help the Arthur Rank Centre (ARC), a Christian countryside charity and resource unit supported by national Churches (including the Methodist Church), the Royal Agricultural Society of England and the Rank Foundation.

For all its beauty, life in the countryside can be tough. Over 900,000 rural households live in poverty, and problems such as depression, stress, relationship difficulties, health, finance and business difficulties can go undiagnosed and unheard.

The Revd Gordon Gatward, director of the ARC, said, "The ARC was chosen for an appeal because we have been supporting rural communities and their churches for over 38 years. Initiatives that have come out of the ARC have given thousands of people hope over the years: Rural Stress Helpline, agricultural chaplains and rural officers, Arthur Rank Training and community development projects like Hidden Britain, Care Farming, Farm Crisis Network and the ARC-Addington Fund."

You can discover more about its activities at <http://www.arthurrankcentre.org.uk/>.

You can hear the BBC Radio 4 Appeal on Sunday 7 March at 7.55am or 9.26pm, or on Thursday 11 March at 3.27pm. It is also online at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qnc7> all that week.

BIBLE FRESH

Bible Fresh is a partnership of over 50 agencies, festivals and denominations (including the Methodist Church) who are joining forces to encourage and inspire churches and individuals to make the most of the Bible in 2011.

2011 is the 400th anniversary of the King James version of the Bible.

Bible Fresh offers a host of ideas and resources to inspire and equip individuals, churches and community to read, meditate, listen, learn and live the Bible.

To find out more go to their website <http://www.biblefresh.com>.

HAITI APPEAL PASSES £400,000 MARK

Donations to both MRDF and the Methodist Church's World Mission Fund are supporting the emergency relief and long-term rehabilitation work being carried out by the Methodist Church in Haiti. MRDF is also channelling funds to Action by Churches Together. As well as funding food, blankets, tents and latrines, donations to MRDF have helped to provide a water purification system in the Belair neighbourhood of Port-au-Prince. This is providing 10,000 homeless Haitians with the first clean drinking water they have had since the earthquake struck.

Expressing his gratitude for the initial grant, the Revd Gesner Paul District President of the Methodist Church in Haiti said, "We thank you for standing near us at this time of severe difficulty and continue to count on your support by any means as we try to recover from this very traumatic disaster."

In his Sunday sermon the Revd George Mulrain, president of the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas, said, "Our contribution to Haiti does not wait until a disaster strikes. It is ongoing. Various agencies and organisations are contributing to relief in Haiti, which is commendable. But soon the dust will settle and the media folk will turn to another 'breaking news story' as the saga of Haiti recedes into the background. Not so with us as Methodists. We are there to stay, because our motive is not to make the news headlines. The love of Christ constrains us and we stay."

The Revd Tom Quenet, Methodist partnership coordinator for the Americas and the Caribbean, is planning to visit Haiti later this month. "The figures that the Methodist Church in Haiti have sent us represent a massive loss of the Church's infrastructure to serve the men, women and children of Haiti," he said. "The destruction of schools means that the effects of the earthquake will be felt by many generations into the future, the loss of clinics means that lives will be shortened for lack of health care, the destruction of child care facilities will mean that children and young people will become vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. The overwhelmingly generous response of the Methodist people means that not only are people receiving water, food and shelter in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, but also the Haitian Church will be best ready to respond in alleviating the long term consequences."

For further information visit the Methodist Church website at <http://www.methodist.org.uk/> or contact the Revd Tom Quenet at <mailto:quenett@methodistchurch.org.uk?subject=Haiti>.

EVANGELISM - Never mind the numbers, prayer turns the key

From New Clipstone Methodist Church, Mansfield Circuit

New Clipstone Methodist Church is a small congregation in an ex-mining village just outside Mansfield. Its congregation rarely reaches double figures but it wanted to develop its work with young people. In the past, the church had run various activities but, for a number of years, things had gone quiet. However, just because things were quiet, it did

not mean that people weren't praying.

A couple of years ago, Alan Darlington, member of a neighbouring church, felt God was calling him to give up a day a week of his teaching job and offer it to the circuit. Alan explains, "The suggestion was taken up and, since September 2008 I have been working with the church in Clipstone to develop work with the schools. The success, though, is not down to me but to the support of others and the doors that God has opened. There are three primary schools in the village. In one, I take assemblies every half term. In another, I lead assemblies and lessons, sometimes helped by volunteers from the circuit. In the final school, we have started an after-school club with helpers from the Methodist church in Clipstone and one lady from a neighbouring church. We run a range of games, crafts and stories and get asked the most searching questions. A day's activity bringing a class of children to the church to look at the life of the Wesleys is being planned.

As yet, no children have appeared on Sundays but, in many ways, this does not matter. Contacts are being made, relationships are being built up, God's love is being shared. On paper, Clipstone is one of the least likely churches to be able to take on such an initiative. However, with support from the circuit, a vision to reach out and a willingness to offer practical support, things are starting to happen. Key to it all has been the commitment of church members to pray."

LEARNING AND CARING - Homelessness @ Cafe Sundae

From Timperley Methodist Church, Altrincham Circuit

A noticeable increase in street homelessness in the Altrincham area resulted in a special café-style service in which almost 100 young people explored homelessness in a teenage-friendly way.

Half of the service was spent on a 'simulation' whereby everyone was made homeless and had 20 minutes to get a roof over their heads. The nightmarish reality of negotiating town halls, job centres, housing units and post offices, just to obtain the right documentation to get into housing, helped make the gospel message come alive in a whole new way.

We were also pleased to welcome David Batchelor - a family mediator from Depaul UK - who told us about the even bigger problem of 'hidden homelessness' and steps we could take to look out for our friends at school.

As our response, we all made cardboard signs, writing what we would want people to know about homelessness.

Timperley Methodist Church's teenage-friendly worship material, called Café Sundae, is all freely shared. Visit the Café Sundae website for packs of material on many issues, including homelessness, and at Myspace for more information.

Cafe Sundae Websites: <http://stores.lulu.com/cafesundae> and

<http://www.myspace.com/cafesundae>

Timperley Church Website: <http://www.timperleymethodist.org.uk>

YOUTH WORKERS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Summary of Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday, 20th January 2010 at Torrington

Debs is starting "messy church at the Bideford Baptist Church. This is arts and crafts for young children with their parents in attendance. It is to be at 4.00 pm on Wednesdays after school. This needs to be okayed by the Baptist Minister at Bideford. Debs has done a leaflet explaining Messy Church. This is an ecumenical project & will be starting soon. This is for the 5 - 7 year age group but will also have an area for younger children. Need young people as volunteers.

Chris and Debs have met Mike Seaton from MAYC & have showed them around. They wanted to know what the future held. Said we wanted to keep on going. They have resources to help funding. They have connections with Rank and within the Methodist Church. They were taken to Buckland and Parkham.

"Life after School" is working well at the moment. The car project has ended due to the weather. Chris will be taking the young people to banger racing and will start the car project again around Easter time.

Chris is wanting to have a porta cabin erected at the Torrington School. Met with Councillors. Has a promise of £500.00 definite. Has missed out on another £500 also promised. Another £1000 has been promised but will need at least £5000. May be able to obtain a spill over classroom from another school. The management committee might be able to give a contribution.

With regard to the Bideford College, Wings are operating there. Chris would prefer to keep to Torrington but he will go and see them. There is a need for a Health Clinic (Tic Tac). They will contact the Family Planning Service to see if they can get any help.

Parkham is now positive. Locals have taken on Puffins. They had a meeting and now have a team including Debs. They are now meeting on a regular basis. Buckland is great. Good community spirit. They have a games consul which is very popular- especially the Karaoke.

The President of Conference and Vice President are visiting the District in early May. Chris and Debs can show them around

Date of next meeting - MONDAY, 15th MARCH 2010 7.30 pm at Torrington.

District Office Up and Running

Mrs Cristina Orchard has started work as District Administrator / PA to the Chair of District. She is currently working from a temporary office at The Mint Methodist Church, Fore Street, Exeter EX4 3AT The office phone number is 01392 211624. This is the preferred number for both the Administrator and the District Chair. The email addresses are as below at present but will be replaced with admin@pemd.org.uk and chair@pemd.org.uk in the near future. We will let you know when this is arranged.

There will be some overlap with my current email address so that mails sent to that address will be forwarded to the new one. We're very grateful to The Mint for all the help and support they have offered and look forward to establishing the full District Resource Centre which we hope will be open by the end of April.

February 2010 meeting of the Methodist Council

The Methodist Council met on 1 – 2 February at the High Leigh Conference Centre in Broxbourne. This is the second Council meeting of this Church year. Key themes running through the Council's discussions were relationships and communication both within the Church and with the wider world.

The first major issue tackled by Council was that of the Church's engagement with social media such as Twitter, Facebook and blogging. Council members considered new guidelines for Church representatives in using new media. The guidelines seek to encourage representatives to make creative use of new media, while at the same time they highlight the potential pitfalls of its misuse. The Council has requested further revisions to come to the April meeting before the final version goes to the Conference in June.

The Council also discussed the nature of leadership and authority in the Church and whether the Church's current leadership structures should be reviewed. In particular, members considered the roles of President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference. Currently, the President and Vice-President are elected to serve for one year, with the President as a presbyter and the Vice-President as a lay person or deacon. Council members considered the possibility of a new a tripartite 'Presidium', consisting of a presbyteral President and two co-Presidents - one lay person and one deacon. The report will be considered by the Working Group in light of the Council's discussion, and a suggestion that a further option be provided for a two person presidium (one member being a presbyter and the other either lay or a deacon). The final report will go to the Methodist Conference in June for a final decision.

Other topics discussed at the Council included urban mission, a future strategy for world church relationships, the Church's position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and changes to the Methodist Ministers Pension Scheme. All of the papers discussed by the Methodist Council can be found online.