

## Circuit Prayer Space June to August 2016

As we give thanks for God's leading, we continue to pray for the direction of the Holy Spirit in all we do

For the stationing process throughout the Connexion; presbyters, deacons and families preparing to leave familiar and loved situations and forming new relationships, For circuits preparing to receive them.

For Rachel and family in the move to new responsibilities; for Dave and family and the Circuit adjusting to changing situations; and for Paula and Catherine preparing to join us.

For conversations about possible merger taking place between Trinity Circuit and ourselves

For the possible recruitment of lay workers, a manager for The Hub, premises officers

That those whom God is prompting to take up leadership roles in Circuit and individual churches, may respond with joy.

Those seeking to discern God's calling to Local Preaching and those who mentor, tutor and support them

For the many people experiencing frailty and ill health at home or in residential care who miss the joy of worship and friendship, for those who visit and keep in touch

The groups that offer companionship, shared interests both social and spiritual and all work that seeks to engage with the local community. Through these, may people experience being loved and valued by others and by God.

The Connexion, and all preparing for the Methodist Conference meeting in London 30 June to 7 July. For the incoming President Roger Walton and the Vice President Judith Lampard, We remember with gratitude those who will be ordained this year and those who will "sit down."



THE METHODIST CHURCH  
LEICESTER NORTH CIRCUIT

# Connexions

June 2016

Despite severe editing (sorry to our lovely contributors) this is a massive Connexions because so much has been and is continuing to happen in our Circuit. That is a good measure of the huge contribution Rachel has made in her time as Superintendent of the Circuit. We are sure that God also has big plans for her in the Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury District, it will be exciting to watch from a safe distance :-)

On June 17<sup>th</sup> our Circuit Service at Harrison Road will be a chance to say goodbye to Rachel and Neil while wishing them all the best in their new home in Wolverhampton. The service will start at 10:30am but we will precede that with singing from 10:15am. After the service everyone is invited to stay for lunch.

After a scary few months of uncertainty (for Dave anyway) we are delighted that Rev'd Paula Hunt is joining us. Her welcome service is at Birstall on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> September at 7pm – please come and celebrate God's blessing together.

### Paula writes:

Hello!

I'm looking forward to joining you in September, and getting to know all about you, so it seems only fair to tell you a bit about me.

I've been a Minister for over twenty years, serving churches in Lancashire and Derby. For the past three years, Cathy and I have been living in Anstey whilst I've been without church responsibilities. Cathy works in the Highcross Centre, in the city centre, helping people to learn about their computers. We have a dog, Sandie, who is very gentle and loves to make new friends, so please say Hello to her when you see us out and about together.

When this newsletter is published, I shall be leading a group of pilgrims in Israel - I love to see the gospel come alive for people as we visit the places Jesus knew so well. But I also love to see the gospel come to life in, and for, the people who can't get to the Holy Land; Christ is alive in Leicester, too!

We'll see you on August 30th, as we begin to get to know one another better, and discover what God has in store for us.

God bless

Paula

## **New Jobs!**

As a Circuit, as Churches and as individuals we continue to seek to respond to what God is doing in our lives and communities. That means we are now looking to fill three new job opportunities in the Circuit. The details are still being worked out, however, we are looking for:

**Children's worker:** Supporting Messy Churches in Birstall and Rothley and schools work in the communities.

**The Hub Cafe Evangelist:** To run the Hub Cafe at Syston as a Church project for the Community.

**Booking Manager Harrison Road:** To encourage and enable community use of the buildings.

Please tell your friends and get the word out! Also watch this space because there are likely to be more jobs in the future.

## **A New Circuit?**

On the agenda for Circuit Meetings (June 7<sup>th</sup> and sometime in September) and for the Circuit Leadership Team is whether a merger with the Leicester Trinity Circuit should be considered for 1<sup>st</sup> Sept 2017, 1<sup>st</sup> Sept 2018 or not at all. A merger would need to be agreed by both Circuit Meetings and the District Synod.

Comments, questions and suggestions are welcome (either to Dave or via the Circuit Office). Exploratory work is being done on a discussion document which will be widely circulated.

## **EVENTS FOR JUNE TO AUGUST 2016**

Messy Church at:

**Birstall** 4-6pm on Saturday 18 June (no meeting in July/August)

**Rothley** 3-5pm on Saturday 25 June (no meeting in July/August)

**Syston** 6-8pm on Fridays 17 June and 8 July (no meeting in August)

Guardians of Ancora Holiday Club at Syston 1<sup>st</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> August from 10am to 11:45am to book call Ann Cairns on 07805046165

Other events:

**Sat 21 May:** 10am – 12noon Christian Aid Coffee Morning at the Rothley Centre, Mountsorrel Lane

**Sat 4 June:** 10am – 2pm themed summer gala at Syston, "A Right Royal Do"

6pm Claremont G & S Lighters (members of the Gilbert and Sullivan Society) present an evening of choruses from G & S and other shows £6 inc buffet

**Sat 18 June:** 10am – 12noon Thursday Group Coffee Morning at Birstall in aid of Medical Detection Dogs

**Sat 1 July:** 7.30pm Quiz and Supper at Rothley - further details later from Sue Wainwright 0785 557548

**Sat 16 July:** 7.30pm – G & S Lighters (members of the Gilbert and Sullivan Society) present an evening of choruses from G & S and other shows – further information 269 5130

**Sun 17 July:** 10:30am Circuit service at Harrison Road

**Wed 17 August** – 3pm – Strawberries and Cream Tea at Rothley – tickets from Sue Wainwright 0785 557548

**Tue 30 August** 7pm Welcome service for Rev'd Paula Hunt at Birstall

**CLOSING DATE FOR THE NEXT EDITION OF CONNEXIONS FRI 29 JULY**

A key question for all the places of worship they visited was about how we value our sacred texts. Dave tried to inspire them with the idea that for us the value is in people reading the Bible, meeting God and having lives transformed. That value can be seen better by Christians willing to give their lives so that others can have access to the Bible than it could be by locking the Bible away in a glass case.

### **The Heart of the Community** writes Keith Baker

“Getting to the heart of the community is a key objective for the recently opened Hub Café in Syston. Now into its’ third month, already local groups are being attracted by the excellent facilities we are providing. So far, we have opened the doors to Charnwood BC Wellness Group, the Leicestershire Family Focus, Supporting Leicester Families, a local history group from the U3A, a singing for fun group, as well as opening the space to a weekly coffee morning for Age Concern. Oh, by the way, we also provide the opportunity for the local PCSO and her Sergeant to debrief every two weeks, as well as many local people who already see The Hub as their local coffee Shop. So far, so good and we will soon be ordering a new coffee making machine to enable us to make Lattes and Cappuccinos, etc., after, of course, Jane, Jules and Jo have had training to become BARISTAs. More volunteers are welcome and we are making progress to employing someone full-time as The Hub Evangelist.

Come and see for yourselves, open between 9.00am-4.00pm each weekday”.

#### **Regular Coffee Mornings at:**

**Birstall** every **Tuesday – Saturday** mornings 10am to 12noon

**Rothley** every **Tuesday** morning 10am to 11.45am

**Edgehill at All Saints** every **Thursday** morning 10am to 12noon

**Claremont** every **Friday** morning 10am to 12noon

**Syston** every **Saturday** morning 10am to 12noon (and Hub Cafe from 9am to 4pm Monday to Friday)

### **Holy week and Easter at Claremont Street**

We enjoyed a traditional Palm Sunday service led by Rev’d Jill Marsh where Palm crosses were distributed. On Monday Mary and Freda planted an Easter Garden for display in the foyer. Maundy Thursday Communion was meaningfully led and presented by Jo Kay in a reflection on the coming Crucifixion. On Good Friday the reflection was led by Pat, Mary and Freda and consisted of Bible Readings, hymns and prayers, followed by Hot Cross Buns. We were joined by folk from other churches.

On Easter Sunday we were again pleased to welcome Jo Kay as we celebrated the resurrection. It was a service full of meaning and Jo’s ministry to us over the Easter period was much appreciated.

### **Good Friday Vigil at Syston** writes Jo Kay

Dave, Dorothy and myself shared leading a 3 hour vigil from 6-9pm. This hadn’t been tried since Dave has been here so we took the plunge so to speak.

We each took an hour and shared Taize songs, hymns, bible readings and some of the Sonnets for the 12 Stations of the Cross by Michael Guite. There were also some periods for silent reflection.

We were delighted by many positive comments afterwards and several people stayed for the full three hours. Someone said that they hadn’t intended to stay for the whole time but wanted to hear all the other words that we shared. We also found the preparation and leading a blessing.

### **Julian Prayer Meetings** writes Jo Kay

These meetings now take place on the fourth Tuesday of every month in the Counselling Room at Syston Methodist Church. We start with a cuppa and a chat, share a meditation and then share in silent contemplation for 20-30 minutes. If you’d like to join us please contact me (details on the plan or [jokay1947@gmail.com](mailto:jokay1947@gmail.com) )

## **Syston Easter Monday Hike** Trevor and Christine Solway write

Tradition requires us to organise walks on New Year's Day and Easter Monday with an added tradition of variable weather. After delaying for half an hour twelve of us rendezvoused after the rain at the car park adjacent to the village hall in Woodhouse Eaves.

The walk started on part of the Leicestershire Round then we made our way to the Great Central railway line running past Swithland Reservoir, our chocolate stop! It being Easter Monday there were several steam trains passing so we had a slightly extended stop to enjoy the magic of Steam trains.

Then to Old Woodhouse again using part of the well signed Leicestershire Round, passing several prestigious properties and dodging occasional Range Rovers.

We passed St. Mary in the Elms Church, which has a long history to 1338, when the Beaumont's of [Beaumanor](#) constructed a chapel dedicated to St. Mary. A little further on we reached Pestilence Cottage. This was the haven of Thomas Rawlins when he settled in Old Woodhouse after escaping from the Great Plague of London in 1665. Out of gratitude to the village that had taken him in he started a school for twenty-two poor boys of Old Woodhouse and Woodhouse Eaves. The school closed due to lack of support in 1892 when Rawlins School was re-founded in Quorn.

The footpath led us back to our starting point, the car park in Woodhouse Eaves--a total of four miles.

From here we drove back to Rothley Court where six others joined us for lunch. I felt sorry for the other small party housed in the same dining area as our table of eighteen. Methodists *en bloc* tend to be rather voluble!!!!

By now the sun was shining and all seemed to have enjoyed the walk, the conversations, the fellowship, and the food. We'll keep doing it as long as we've the energy!!

The next course starts in the Lounge at Birstall on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> May at 7:30pm. We will also be running a daytime course in the Hub at Syston. Contact Dave for more details ([dave@warnock.me.uk](mailto:dave@warnock.me.uk) or 0116 260 7626)

## **'Holy Habits'** writes Susan Wheeler

Rachel has been leading a weekly evening group 'Holy Habits' in Birstall. We have had really interesting discussions on the ten holy habits of bible teaching, fellowship, prayer, eating together, giving, service, breaking bread, gladness, generosity, and making more disciples. We shared a lovely meal together which gave us the opportunity of getting to know each other better. This has been a really useful, thought provoking course with many ideas for us to include in our daily lives.'

## **Another view of Holy Habits** writes Chris Brice

The Holy Habits course has been enjoyable, informative, challenging, and comforting. It has allowed us to look at various aspects of our lives and consider where we stand and what we should be doing. At the last meeting one member said, partly in jest, attendance in itself had become a 'habit'. Looking at the holy habits can help us become aware of other helpful and unhelpful habits. For example 'We do this because we've always done it'.

The Holy Habits course can be useful as spiritual 'spring cleaning', enabling us to appreciate and assess our spiritual journey. I found this extremely helpful and would strongly recommend this course to anyone.

## **Filling Harrison Road with Children** writes Dave Warnock

In April we welcomed to Harrison Road over 250 children in 6 groups spread over 3 days. They were the year 7 students from Brookvale High School in Groby.

Brian Cottam told stories of how the Church came to be where it is and of the fundraising efforts of the 400 children in the Sunday School while Dave connected this with a little bit of wider history and more about how we worship and use the building.

is meaningful and memorable, to encourage and uplift for the coming week, as we are all disciples of Jesus Christ, commissioned to spread the Gospel in whatever way the Holy Spirit guides us.

**Margrith Hucknall** Brian Pearson writes

Those of you who knew Margrith when she and John were in the Circuit would be as shocked as I was to hear that she had died in April after a short illness due to a brain tumour. I first met her in 1997 when I was Senior Circuit Steward and they came to visit the Circuit. John accepted an invitation to be Superintendent Minister with pastoral care of the City Section Churches, which really pleased us! Margrith was working as a nurse but she was still able to help John and support the Circuit, particularly the three City Section Churches. She contributed a love of cooking and entertaining. Margrith also got me involved in District Manse visiting with her. She was always interested in what was happening with our own family, our church and how the members were getting on. John summed up Margrith's gift for helping to carry people's burdens by telling the congregation at the service of thanksgiving, that when she was a student at the Basel Mission, the students there were so impressed with this gift, that they presented her with a small wooden carving of a donkey, an animal well used to carrying burdens! Margrith kept the carving on her bedside table for the rest of her life. Margrith will be greatly missed by John and the family and by all the friends that she made over the years. We look back on her time with us in the Leicester North Circuit with fondness and grateful thanks.

## **Are you happy?**

And are you happy with that answer?

We now have 3 people in the Circuit trained to deliver the excellent Happiness Course developed by Livability. In 4 sessions we explore how we can live happier lives using material that has been well tested and is built upon Positive Psychology.

**At the Cross** Jean Aldwinckle writes

The glorious sunshine brought thousands of people into Humberstone Gate to join in the Multi Faith event, "At the Cross", which took place on Good Friday.

David Lewis led the enthusiastic singing, which included "When I survey the Wondrous Cross" and the great Welsh Revival hymn "Here is Love vast as the Ocean", and the Act of Worship was led by the acting bishop Rt. Revd. John Holbrook.

The Easter story was told with the help of our own (Birstall) Big Puppets and Josh Smith, as Jesus, portrayed our Lord on the Cross in a very moving way, as he was hoisted up. Jonezy, a local rap artist brought his own style to the proceedings, telling us that he had gone through a 'dark' time in his life, even having suicidal thoughts, before he gave his heart to Jesus.

It was wonderful to join with people from all walks of life, faiths and ages, eager to praise our Lord in a truly uplifting way.....private prayer and/or support was available to anyone in need.

Jonezy continued to sing after the event, much to the delight of many of the crowd, who stayed on to sing, clap and dance with joy! Now that "At the Cross" is held in one place in Leicester, in Humberstone Gate, it is even easier to come and participate. Seats are available, especially if you get there early! So if you have a physical impairment you can join in the celebrations.

**Giant Puppets at the Cross** Rachel Parkinson writes

The puppet team was delighted to be invited to contribute to "Leicester @ the Cross" on Good Friday at Humberstone Gate. This large act of Christian witness drew thousands on a sunny day. We had two new sketches, with help from the Soar Valley Music Centre. We began with a comic sketch based on the disciples "borrowing" the donkey for Jesus' entrance in Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Towards the end of events, our Angel appeared to women at the tomb. We only have one female puppet, but since

scale doesn't matter when you're playing opposite an angel, Susan and Rachel Wheeler played the women.

The Rev'd Peter Hancock, Chair of the Northampton District, gave the address. Waving a bottle to the assembled crowd he invited them to taste the new wine of the Kingdom (though, in true Methodist style, he did offer a non-alcoholic bottle as well).

Later in April, Rachel and John Towson took some of the puppets to the Conference of Methodist Women in Britain. After a workshop we rehearsed "the Call of Samuel" and performed it at the evening entertainment, a serious message amidst the laughter. Our appearance in the Methodist magazine "Connexion" last year encouraged Methodists on the Isle of Man to make their own nativity puppets. We continue to be surprised and delighted at how our project has taken off and continues to enthuse and inspire people.

### **Edgehill Methodists @ All saints** Brian Pearson writes

On Easter Sunday Steve Hoggar, one of our former Ministers, led our worship. Whilst we were not able to offer a breakfast we all enjoyed a piece of homemade Simnel Cake after the service. It seems that some members of our congregation have a sweet tooth and are rather partial to the odd bit of marzipan!

At our Church Anniversary on the 17<sup>th</sup> April Rachel led us in our worship and shared with us some of her experiences from her recent walk on the North Wales Pilgrim Way (see Rachel's article below for more)

### **Rothley Messy Church** Sue Wainwright writes

We have been blessed with lots of new families that have been coming along (upto 50 people a couple of times), the atmosphere is uplifting and is absolutely fantastic to see the church full on these Saturdays, creating a big buzz!

We start with crafts (food ones are always popular) then worship while the hall is transformed so we can share a meal. Cooking is easier now thanks to Circuit money upgrading the electrics.

### **World Mission Fund Treasurer** Stephen Thompson writes

My thanks to the Circuit for this appointment and for offering the collection of £345.05p at our recent Circuit Service to the Methodist Church Fund for World Mission. I also want to thank those in the churches in our Circuit who are World Mission Fund Treasurers and also JMA Treasurers, and in particular my predecessor Heather Parris who did this job in our Circuit for many years.

I've been committed to World Mission ever since I became a JMA collector in 1963 and was the World Mission Fund Treasurer at my previous church. I've enjoyed being able to worship in Methodist Churches while on holiday around the world, including The Gambia, Kenya, Barbados, Sri Lanka and Malaysia.

The Methodist Church publishes an online World Church News Bulletin monthly, the latest one included news about Fiji (hit by a hurricane in February), Nepal (affected by the India/Nepal border blockade) and others. Please continue to support the Methodist Church World Mission Fund.

### **Graham's Call to Preach** writes Graham Tennant

Ten years ago the minister of our church asked me about leading worship. At the time I reasoned that I was too busy at work, and it was a difficult time of my life. I realise since then many occasions and opportunities have shown me that maybe I could do this. I went away for 6yrs to work in Scotland and I attended the Church of Scotland. There were many rewarding and challenging experiences that have been important to my journey here. When I returned home permanently at the beginning of last year, challenges and responses continued which led me to think about Local Preaching and I started to think 'I need to do this'. That has been confirmed by others, even my Mother-in-law, and by my work/life circumstances. You should know that you will be getting someone rather different as a local preacher, as I tend to take a new approach to some conventions and traditions. I do not intend to shake up or cause disquiet, just to lead and teach in a way that

## **Connecting with the Connexion** Dorothy Hutchinson writes

How often have we said, “We never know what's going on?” Here are some suggestions for keeping in touch with what's happening round the Connexion.

- Try the Methodist Recorder from newsagent or by post  
Temporary address 3-5 Lambeth Rd, London SE1 7 DQ
- Sign up for e-newsletters by going to [www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk) and selecting what interests you. Some examples are:
  - E-news: General news, events and resources
  - The Buzz: good news stories from local churches
  - The Well: news for children, youth, schools, family workers
  - Press releases from the Media Office
  - The Week ahead: weekly news
  - Local Preacher News
  - Property Matters
  - World Church Bulletin

These come from the Media Office 0207 467 5191

- The Joint Public Issues Team (works for social justice on behalf of The Methodist Church, Baptist Union and United Reformed Church) see [www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/](http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/)
- A Word in Time is a daily online Bible reading resource at [www.methodist.org.uk/prayer-and-worship/a-word-in-time](http://www.methodist.org.uk/prayer-and-worship/a-word-in-time)
- Magazines such as “the connexion magazine,” Methodist Homes for the Aged, are available in all our churches.

Follow the Methodist Conference 30 June – 7 July 2016 on [www.methodist.org.uk/conference](http://www.methodist.org.uk/conference) with its worship, business, reports, and general goings on! Worship, debates, and most of the business can be accessed by the live streaming facility. If all this is helpful, more can be provided next time.

Both Syston and Birstall will be using the Live Conference worship on Sunday morning 3<sup>rd</sup> July

## **North Wales Pilgrims' Way** Rachel Parkinson writes

“Thus says the Lord: Stand at the crossroads, and look and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way lies; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls. Jeremiah 6:16

This year for my silent retreat I felt called to do something a little different. Instead of staying in one retreat house I walked the first part of the North Wales Pilgrims' Way, from Holywell to Penmanemawr. The route links together many ancient sacred sites and with a medieval route of pilgrimage to Bardsey Island as the final destination. I really enjoyed the experience. It was largely silent as I only saw two walkers in the 6 days of walking--the Methodist minister from Llandudno and her husband! Accommodation included three different retreat houses plus a static caravan on a farm. The journey required some courage and fortitude - especially in the face of hail, gale force winds and cows! It was a useful lesson that courage is learned on the job as it were - it's something that is difficult to practice beforehand. A useful lesson for me with the challenges that lie ahead later this year!

### **Captions for photos**

1. Mothering Sunday Hen at Birstall
2. People throng to watch “At the Cross” in Humberstone Gate
3. Local actor Josh Smith vividly portrays Jesus' crucifixion
4. Birstall's Giant Puppets appearing in “At the Cross”
5. Syston Art Group display their Easter artwork in the Link
6. Welcome to Paula Hunt and Sandie the beagle???
7. Syston Easter Monday walkers. Rigsby looks totally bored.
8. Messy Birstall team out for dinner.
9. Rothley Messy Church
10. Rachel at Edghill Church Anniversary
11. Margrith Hucknall's funeral display showing her favourite things
12. Five go on Retreat at Douai Abbey
13. Drug awareness at the Youth Café. Paul and Bex photobomb!
14. Edgehill Saints singing at their Church Anniversary

