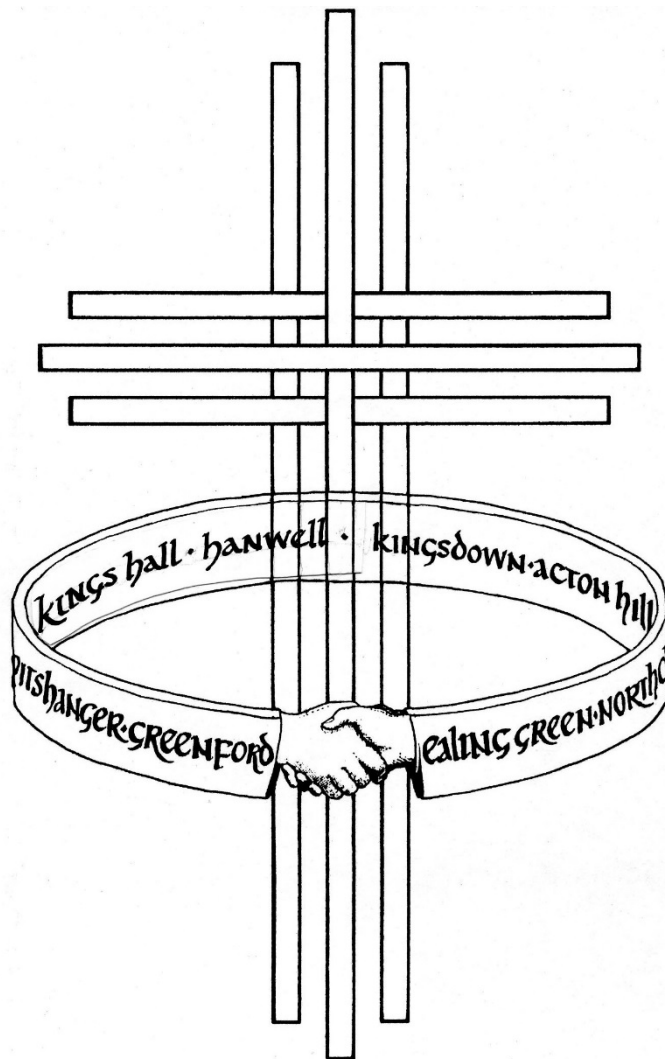


In-touch

No 68

June - August 2014



The magazine for *all* the Ealing Trinity Circuit.

IN THIS ISSUE

	Page
• From the Superintendent	3
• Circuit Membership Course	5
• Candidating News <i>Rebecca Catford, Hanwell</i>	5
• Local Preachers	5
• Summer Series	6
• From the Circuit Meeting	6
• Tickets for Rev Suva Catford's Ordination	7
• 'Talents' Gifts	8
• 'Quiet Zones' in Northolt Park <i>Rev Peter Catford</i>	13
• The Garden <i>Ray Garnet, Hanwell</i>	14
• MRDF Relaunches as All We Can <i>Alan Smith, Circuit AWC Co-ordinator</i>	15
• MWiB - London District, Past President's Report 2012-2013 <i>Blossom Jackson, Past President MWiB</i>	17
• Prime Minister's Questions	18
• A Student in Arms <i>Gerald Barton, Editor</i>	19
• The Truth about Noah's Ark <i>Donald Burling, Acton Hill</i>	22
• Remember – Summer 2014 <i>Mary Newman, Pitshanger</i>	25
• Circuit Directory Update	28
• Events Around the Circuit	28

Circuit website
www.ealingtrinity.org.uk

From the Superintendent

Welcome to the June edition of *In Touch* magazine, in the Ealing Trinity Circuit!

Summer in Methodism is the season of changes. There would be much to say about all that has been developing (see my letter in last quarter's edition of *In Touch*, still available online), but let me contain myself to the goodbyes and hellos we make this summer in more detail.

We make a large 'hello' to one already here, the Revd Suva Catford, as she is ordained on 29 June, at Shirley Methodist Church as part of the annual Methodist Conference. Ordinations are extraordinary events - it is a ticketed service and if you would like to attend, please register interest with Gerald Barton at the Circuit office as soon as possible. The Circuit will cover transport costs by chartered coach, and it will be a wonderful opportunity to join with Methodists from around the country in worship. Come celebrate not just Suva's vocation, but your own as a member of this Circuit and British Methodism.

This August we will say goodbye to the Revd Chrissie Howe, who moves on after two years here. Chrissie has been the minister of Kingsdown and the churches at the King's Hall in Southall, whom she has seen through the closure of their building and the beginnings of their new life. In this ministry she has served ably and with great pastoral strength, we thank her for it. She began in September 2012 as minister of Northolt and Greenford, and since June 2013 has served Kingsdown, moving last Summer to live locally in the Northfields community. In addition she has been our Faith and Worship tutor for local preachers' in training and contributed to Circuit courses and discipleship, and been a welcome preacher around the Circuit.

Chrissie has made a strong contribution during her time here to our Circuit policy development, writing our training grant policy and launching the '5000 Talents' mission initiative at the Circuit meeting, from which we have all benefited! You may not know that she has also been working for a PhD part time as a continuation of her training after ordination, and has undertaken a variety of Connexional roles: she has been a member of the Roman Catholic/Methodist Dialogue Group nationally, as well as serving as chaplain to the transfer panel that receives ministers of other Conferences. She was elected to the quinquennial Oxford Institute in August 2013, and has served on the District Candidates' Committee, and worked connexionally to support candidates for the ministry. We wish Chrissie every blessing as she moves into her new home and Circuit in the Wales District! **A Circuit service will make a formal goodbye to Chrissie in worship, at 6.30pm on Sunday 20 July at Kingsdown Methodist Church.**

At that service, we will also recognise the service of Vera Marston, who will cease preaching after 27 years' service as a local preacher. These last two years Vera has served as Secretary to the Leaders of Worship and Preachers' meeting. Vera has also been, in her time, an able Circuit and church treasurer, and a Circuit and church steward and councillor: we hope we will still benefit from her thoughtful insights and guidance even as she 'sits down' from active preaching. Well done,

Vera! We may well have other Circuit celebrations and recognitions to make at that service, but I know you will hold these two especially in your prayers.

In September we will welcome the Revd Rachel Bending (coming from Fulham in the new Victoria, Hammersmith, Chelsea Circuit) to take up the station that Chrissie has vacated; we will also welcome Probationer Deacon Lemia Nkwelah who leaves Wesley House, Cambridge, this year and will proceed to Ordination in 2016, God willing. Lemia will live in Greenford, and will establish an MHA 'live at home' scheme in addition to working for mission development in Southall. **We will welcome them in worship at 2.00pm on Sunday 7th September, location tbc, but in Southall where they will both be serving.** At the same time we will mark the move of Deacon Richard Goldstraw to live in Acton, and to serve pastorally at Acton Hill and Ealing Green, alongside his Circuit wide engagements.

In addition, this June we will host the first of several student ministers on placement (work experience) in the circuit in the coming year, as part of our commitment to resource theological education in the wider church: Moses Agyam will join us for a five week period 1st June – 6th July. He is midway through his two year course of study at the Queen's Foundation, Birmingham, and may be stationed anywhere in the country in September 2015. It is a good sign that our colleges and courses have such a strong desire for students to do placements with us; it speaks both of their confidence in our working and their recognition of the unique context in which our churches are set. Please welcome Moses as you see him!

Each church will have its own goodbyes and hellos, and changes: pray for Hanwell as it gets its necessary work underway and undertakes a review of mission, for Northolt in its discipleship in local schools and Greenford in its FoodBank; Pray for Pitshanger and its Monday cafe for elders and Acton Hill as it prepares for its flower festival, open day, and Gospel concerts. Pray for Kingsdown as it prepares for a new minister and integrates the morning King's Hall congregation as a class meeting, and for the King's Hall afternoon congregation as it develops its mission and changes ministry. Of course, also pray for Ealing Green as its major refurbishment begins this summer. Pray for our Circuit stewards as they get manses ready and ministers as they move on and settle in.

We will continue to walk together as we develop a stronger pattern of Circuit-wide mission, supporting each other. As ever, please stay in touch with me, and your ministers, and let us know of the things we should be celebrating locally in your church. We are one Body, and look to deepen our discipleship, grow our churches and be a blessing in our communities. Have confidence, friends: the seeds God plants do bear fruit.

Every Blessing, Jen

Circuit Membership Course

The next Circuit Membership course will start on Sunday 1st June with further sessions planned for 8th, 15th and 22nd June. Sessions will start at 4.30pm and finish at about 6.00pm and will take place at Kingsdown in the Dome Room (access via the entrance to the church hall). There will be one further session plus a visit to Methodist sites in London (dates to be arranged). The course will be led by Rev's Peter and Suva Catford.

All ages are welcome to join the course although it will be aimed primarily at adults. In addition, current members who would like a 'refresher' will be welcome to join. If you are interested in joining the course, please contact Peter or Suva or speak to your minister.

Candidating News

From Rebecca Catford

For those who haven't heard I haven't been recommended to go forward to pre-ordination training. I have accepted their decisions, although it was a blow, and am considering what I can do next. It is an exciting if scary time for me. Thank you for your support and prayers.

Local Preachers

Rekha Cheriyan from Kingsdown has joined Ade Benson and David Richards as a local preacher 'on note'. We are looking forward to them moving to 'on trial' status when they can start taking services.

In the meantime, two of our local preachers 'on trial', Mark Budu-Manuel and Regina Prempeh have had to step back from preaching as, sadly they have been unable to maintain progress in their course of training. The gifts that both have brought to preaching have been recognised around the Circuit and we hope they will be able to use them in the future to contribute to the life of their local churches and to the Circuit.

Finally, Vera Marston has decided to retire from preaching after 27 years of service. Vera was recognised as a Local Preacher in 1987. Our thanks are due to Vera for her tremendous contribution to the life of Circuit in her service as a Local Preacher.

Summer Service Series

Once again, a Summer Service Series is being developed to help preachers and churches with Sunday services during the Summer period. The series will be offered on an 'opt in' basis so that preachers and churches don't have to use them if they prefer not to.

The overall theme for the services is 'Developing Christian Virtues' and will provide services for a total of 7 weeks starting on 20th July and running to 31st August. The services will be linked to the Gospel lectionary and will cover a different 'virtue' each week - developing the capacity to discern, to wonder, to have compassion, to face our fear, to pray, to hold on, and finally, to let go.

At the time of writing, the series is under development. Further details will be available soon.

From the Circuit Meeting

The most recent Circuit Meeting took place on 13th March at Pitshanger.

The Circuit budget for the next Connexional year was presented and, with one small amendment was approved by the meeting. In addition, the meeting approved the Circuit's annual report to the Charity Commission.

The meeting considered several grant applications. Firstly, the meeting decided to grant £1,000 over the next three years to support the work of the Ealing FoodBank. The application was supported by Chris Sutton from the FoodBank who also spoke about its work and the related developments at Greenford church.

Two grants were approved under the Circuit's new 'Crisis Grants' process. Firstly, the meeting approved a grant of £20,000 for Hanwell to carry out necessary works. Some of these relate to health and safety issues, whilst part relates to solving problems with water pressure in the building and the former caretaker's flat (now leased).

The second 'crisis' grant was awarded to the King's Hall afternoon congregation. This is to help them meet their annual assessment and to pay for their associate minister, Rev Salamat Zindani. Following closure of the building at King's Hall, the congregation has lost some of its number and also the financial benefit of letting space in the old building. The grant will help them through their current difficult circumstances.

On the subject of King's Hall, both congregations formally passed responsibility for the building to the Circuit. This move simplifies the process of selling the building. In addition, the Meeting approved the request for King's Hall morning congregation to become a 'class meeting' attached to Kingsdown. This means that they are no

longer officially a separate 'local church' and therefore will not have a church council. They will, however continue to meet at Hanwell at 9.30am on Sunday mornings.

Representatives from each church gave a brief account of how they were using the 'Talents' gift from the Circuit. You can read more about what most of our churches are doing in a separate article in this edition of In-touch, but the brief details are:-

- Acton Hill – a pilot of four 'Messy Church' outreach events, the first of which was on 22nd March, developing a new website,; and buying the 'Singing the Faith' hymn book.
- Ealing Green – their big refurbishment is going ahead, and they are planning an exhibition of the Methodist Modern Art Collection.
- Greenford have started a FoodBank and hosted a group from YWAM (Youth with a Mission) in September.
- Hanwell are hoping to organize a weekly lunch at £2.50 per person, and also children's events (see advert for 'Teddy Bears Picnic' on p24).
- Kingsdown have had an 'away day' to reflect on Mission development.
- Pitshanger have invested in Quiet Zones with further projects to come.
- King's Hall (pm) had 250 people at a carol concert and are organising a 5,000 leaflet drop to publicise their mission.
- Northolt had an 'open day' last September and were planning Quiet Zones for Holy Week

Finally, Bill Cocking has retired from his role as Property Secretary for the Circuit after many years. Members of the meeting offered their thanks for all his work and presented him with a small gift.

Tickets for Rev Suva Catford's Ordination Service

Rev Suva Catford will be received into 'full connexion' on Sunday 29th June at a service in Shirley (Birmingham). The Circuit has a small number of tickets available to offer to anyone in the Circuit who would like to go. If you would like to go, please contact the Circuit Office by 8th June. Tickets will be allocated on a 'first come, first served' basis, although preference will be given to people from Suva's churches.

In addition, the Circuit is organising a coach, for which there will be no charge, to take people to the service. When requesting tickets, please also indicate if you would like to go on the coach.

‘Talents’ Gifts

At the last Circuit meeting, each church was asked to submit a piece for In-touch describing how they have used, or intend to use the ‘Talent’ gift from the Circuit. Here are the details from Acton Hill, Ealing Green, Greenford, Hanwell, Kingsdown and Pitshanger.

‘Talents’ Gift - Acton Hill

Rev Dr Jennifer Smith

In September Acton Hill had a Bible study on the Great Commission ('Go forth and baptise') and came out with three themes we wanted to pursue for mission - work with children, better support for music in worship, and better communication/advertising of the church.

Everyone was then invited to submit ideas in writing, and three came in - a professional website, buying Singing the Faith, and launching 'Messy Church' worship. This followed members of the church taking part in the Christian Media conference supported by the Circuit in the Autumn, and getting ideas from that.

There was an open invitation to dinner to chat through all the ideas informally, and how they would work - with real honesty and grappling with questions such as what is worship, and what are the goals of messy church in relation to existing worship - and should we be doing straightforward evangelism, etc. All the ideas were costed and presented back to the church meeting. Although the church meeting made the decisions, key to the process were informal gatherings for conversation - some with and some without the minister - where people actually talked things through and had some fun.

As it happened, the three ideas in total fully funded came to £5,005. The church meeting in February decided to do all three:

- We have bought 50 word copies and 20 music of Singing the Faith, and 3 large print. These will be dedicated in worship on 4th May.
- We decided to commission a designer to make a professional standard website (at the survey stage now - studying interests of the community to pitch to those outside, vs. inside the church)
- We committed to a pilot year, with review, of 4 messy church worships for different festivals - this included paying a national messy church trainer to come to help prepare, which we would definitely recommend. 14 people, including several from different Circuit and area churches attended training and a team of 12 led the first messy church, on Mothering Sunday. Over 70 people from the community came to the first event, often whole families with 3 generations, and over 40 children including some from our existing

congregation, who loved it. Advertising and pitching the games, crafts, and food correctly was very important, as was the team effort, because no one got exhausted. Understanding this as worship and truly all age (vs. just for children) was central. We hired cleaners to mop and clean properly afterward to prepare for Easter which was excellent, and one person from another circuit church even came and helped on the day to see what it was like!

At the same time, Acton Hill has been encouraged by the 'Talents' initiative to design a new logo and welcome material using a young local designer, re-launch its newsletter, and planned an open day, flower festival, Caribbean evening, and other events - and is getting new signs at the front. These things are not funded by the 'Talents' gift, but are a good extension of it. We would encourage people to use Circuit training funds for things like the Christian media conference, which really inspired some of us.

'Talents Gift' - Ealing Green

Rev Dr Jennifer Smith

Ealing Green is fully immersed in preparing for its refurbishment right now, expecting to break ground in August this year, and did not want the Circuit money simply to be swallowed in that project but to force the church to look beyond it.

In September we had an open-ended Bible study about the different things Jesus describes as mission in a church meeting after worship. Then anyone who wanted was invited to come to dinner and brainstorm ideas. These included adding a shower/wet room to an area not being refurbished, having a church away weekend, or other ideas linked to the three mission themes of the refurbishment, which are worship, hospitality, and fellowship.

All of these went back to a full church meeting, and they may all happen - but what the church has chosen is to host a 6 week exhibit of the Methodist Collection of Modern Art between Easter and Pentecost 2016 in its new sanctuary. The £5,000 is almost exactly the cost of the transport, staging, and insurance for the collection, which will be open to the public and may also include an artist in residence to help us respond to the exhibit in worship, etc.

The exhibit is not the mission itself, but the mission is in the ways we will respond to the exhibit around the three themes of worship, fellowship, and hospitality. We are planning to work with local schools, nursing homes, at risk groups, and be open to the general public. It will launch the refurbished space for the community as a whole, and do something that gives a physical welcome while inviting people to engage with Christian themes in the collection.

It is also a Circuit-wide mission initiative, and the planning group already includes people from different churches - this is a requirement of the Collection to host an

exhibit. If you would like to be involved (especially if you have experience of this kind of thing) please be in touch!

‘Talents’ Gift - Greenford

Janet Malamah-Thomas

Greenford have spent some of the Talents gift on welcoming a group called YWAM (Youth with a Mission from Switzerland), the very successful Foodbank and also the Ealing Churches Winter Night Shelter. We are also trying to get some posters for the hallway about Methodism and also possibly to invest in a website for our church.

Youth with a Mission

The early morning of 22nd September saw the arrival at Greenford Methodist of 10 young people from YWAM. They had no idea of what they were letting themselves in for and in truth neither did we.

In the following two weeks they were involved in outreach and activities across the Borough supporting the 24/7 prayer initiative, groups, worship and engaging with the community. In Greenford they supported the church being open for prayer and also took advantage of our position to be outside talking to people as they came in and out of the Broadway. The team also shared in worship at the Grange Care Centre.

Their presence was a real blessing encouraging us to think outside the box and offer open handed generosity to a group of strangers; finding that in God’s economy when that happens miracles occur.

The love and encouragement given and received was immense, a real move of the Spirit.

God has richly blessed us in this time. We are hoping to accommodate them again in the future.

Winter Night Shelter

The Winter Night Shelter took much organising and was primarily organised by Lynne Thomas who put together a great team of volunteers to cover all the responsibilities that were needed to make the Night Shelter the success that it was. We are hoping to do a repeat of the Night Shelter later this year.

Foodbank

A team from the congregation at Greenford rallied round to get prepared so the Foodbank could go ahead at the end of 2013 leading into 2014. The Foodbank continues to be a success with a rising number of the community attending on a Monday afternoon.

Greenford would like to thank the Circuit for the 'Talents' gift which has enabled us to continue God's work in this way.

'Talents' Gift - Hanwell:

Mary Lavelle, Senior Steward

In June 2013 we learnt that each church in the Circuit was to receive £5000, which was to be used for mission. This provided us with an exciting opportunity to increase our presence within the local community. Our church family generated a list of over 20 ideas. The ones which gained the most support, were those which would open up our church on a regular basis and encourage people from our local community to come into the church building.

We are hoping to offer a weekly lunch on Wednesdays between 12.00 – 2.00pm of soup, sandwiches cake and coffee for £2.50. At the moment we are trying to recruit sufficient volunteers to run this project.

Meanwhile we have used some of the Talents Grant to fund a couple of children's events. Building on our successful Easter Egg hunt last year we ran another one on Saturday 5th April and knowing that we had the Talents' Grant meant that we could be slightly more ambitious in our planning.

In June we are using some of the Talents' Grant to run a Teddy Bears' Picnic, which will be another event to which we can invite parents and children from the local community and from the various groups who use our church premises.

'Talents' Gift - Kingsdown

Gerald Barton, Secretary to Church Council

Kingsdown decided to use the Talents gift from the Circuit to pay for an 'Awayday' to give us a chance to consider 'where we are' as a church, our recent past and to begin thinking about how we should see our future. Kingsdown has certainly been through some challenging times in recent years. The redevelopment project, which lasted a good 10 years in all absorbed an awful lot of attention, time, effort and fundraising, and the more recent changes in ministers have left us feeling rather disorientated. Now that the redevelopment project is behind us and we have a new minister arriving in September, we felt the time was opportune to start thinking about 'where we are' as a church, and 'where we go from here'. So, on Saturday 5th April, around 25 of us went to the Royal Foundation of St Katharine in Limehouse for a church 'AwayDay'.

The Royal Foundation of St Katharine was a wonderful venue. Despite being in the busy area of Limehouse, it felt tranquil and peaceful and provided a good

atmosphere in which to reflect. Because the Foundation provided everything for us, we could all join in right throughout the day. The food incidentally, was excellent.

Wendy Beard, who is Regional Training and Development Officer did a wonderful job in guiding and facilitating our discussions. We started by considering our recent past looking at both the positives ('ladders') and the negatives ('snakes'). Some things figured as both – the redevelopment for one. Whilst it came almost to dominate our church life, we now have a much better building. If anything, being able to have after-service coffee in the church foyer has probably brought us closer together as more of us now stay than was the case when we used the hall.

We then did the first round of the 'angel' exercise. We each chose a picture of an angel to symbolise how we felt about the past. We then talked about why we'd each chosen our particular angel in small groups of three and as a full group. Finally, Wendy encouraged us to put all those things into the past and leave them behind. Although we'd written all of our 'snakes' and 'ladders' on pieces of paper, Wendy took away the 'snakes' so we can no longer refer to them, because, as she said, "They're all in the past – you don't need those now."

After lunch we continued with the 'angel' exercise, this time choosing pictures of angels to symbolise how we felt about the future of our church. We started discussing in groups of three, each explaining why we'd chosen our particular angels. Each group then chose one of those angels. Doing this also meant we had to let go of some images about the future in favour of others. Groups were then combined together, first to make a new group of six, and then twelve. At each step we discussed which of our angels we should adopt and which should be let go. When Wendy has done this with other groups, sometimes they all agree on one angel as summing up their view of their church and its future. When she did it with her church in Woking, they ended up with five. In our case we finished with four.

Some of angels were in many ways similar, reflecting a desire for our church to be a welcoming, compassionate and safe place. One was very different from the others. It reflected the possibility of struggles ahead as we seek to go forward but with a vision, albeit as yet undefined to guide us.

Overall, the day was very successful. We thought a bit about the past, and decided to 'let it go'. We took some first steps towards thinking about our future as a church. A good deal more thought, reflection and prayer will be needed as our joint view of the future gradually takes shape – there is I think, something in what that 'different' angel from our final round of discussions symbolises.

'Talents' Gift - Pitshanger

Pitshanger are planning to upgrade and improve their audio equipment, to enable easier access to the services and extend the range of music able to be played.

'Quiet Zones' in Northolt Park

Rev Peter Catford

During Holy Week, Soul in Northolt and Greenford (SING) used Northolt Park Baptist Church (NPBC) to host Quiet Zones which were given to SING by Pitshanger Methodist Church. On Palm Sunday afternoon we joined a team of volunteers from Northolt Methodist and NPBC set the Quiet Zones up, and the doors opened on Monday at 10.00am.



The Quiet Zones are difficult to explain but roughly speaking they are a series of areas under gazebos that invite people to experience prayer in many hands- on ways.

The Zones were open each day between 1.000 am and 4.00pm with volunteers ensuring that people were invited in and then given space to pray. The week started slowly as we had not advertised at all. However by Good Friday evening 220 plus people of all ages, mostly teenagers and young families had come and prayed.

The visitor book comments included

It was really helpful and made me feel better

A great and wiseful peaceful place, to let go of worries and build relationships with God. Thank you

Calm and relaxing a great experience and a chance to let go of any doubts or worries I have

I really enjoyed it and it calmed me down and made me realise how much I need to spend time with God as he hasn't changed but it's me

I think it was creative very peaceful and have learnt a lot

Very peaceful! Which is a change – oasis of quiet

Very unexpected and a surprise as thought church was inactive. I found the tree zone calming and the world area educational

Thank you to all who made this week possible giving time during a very busy week - Charmaine, John and Sue from NPBC, Pitshanger Methodist Church and from the Circuit; Jane, Karen, Janet, John, Constance, Win, Christina and Sylvia.

If you would like to know more please contact Suva and Peter Catford.

The Garden

A poem by Ray Garnett, Hanwell

Side to side, side to side.
The thrush sings its sweetest song,
It is nesting time.

Side to side, side to side.
My mind wanders,
Could God have made anything sweeter?

Its mate arrives carrying twigs.
It pauses to check what I am doing,
Before disappearing beneath a tile.

Side to side, side to side.
The sweet smell of freshly cut grass
Mixed with burning logs,
Activates my senses.

The gentle sound of trickling water
Cascading to a pond.
It makes me think,
Is this Heaven?

Side to side, side to side.
It is tranquil and I'm at peace.
My mind wanders yet again,
It is a place to think of God.

It is dusk, shadows lengthen,
And sunbeams shine between the trees.
God is here.

Side to side, side to side.
It should last until next Spring,
When I shall start all over again.

Side to side, side to side.
The shed is done.



Methodist Relief &
Development Fund

Relaunches as



Methodist
relief and
development

Alan Smith, All We Can Co-ordinator, Ealing Trinity Circuit.
allwecan@questa.co.uk

On 8 April 2014 the Methodist Relief and Development Fund (MRDF) announced an ambitious set of plans for the future, including a new name to reflect its commitment to tackle poverty. From today, it will be known as **All We Can**, the Methodist relief and development partner.

The charity's new strategy and strengthened identity are the result of a wide-ranging strategic review, carried out over the last year, involving supporters, staff, volunteers and overseas partners.

Maurice Adams, Chief Executive of **All We Can**, says: "Over the years All We Can, under various names, has provided support and resources to many millions of people in great need. Our vision for the next chapter in the story of Methodist relief and development work seeks to build upon our strengths and heritage. This change has been inspired by our past so that we can continue the work for the future."

"We believe that our collaborative approach to tackling poverty, rooted in Christian principles and Methodist values, is more relevant than ever. We have refocused our work to better support our partners – including churches, organisations and individuals – to bring about lasting change in their communities. Our new identity reflects the renewal of our commitment to work in partnership and to do all we can for those who need us most."

New identity

For its new name, the charity has taken inspiration from words attributed to John Wesley, the founder of Methodism:

***Do all the good you can. By all the means you can. In all the ways you can.
In all the places you can. At all the times you can. To all the people you can.
As long as ever you can.***

Maurice Adams explains: "As part of our strategic review, we considered the organisation's identity and the way we present ourselves. We had recognised for some time that the name we adopted nearly 30 years ago no longer accurately reflected the work we do – having been much more than simply a fund for many years – and that it was not helping us in the challenging tasks of raising our profile and

increasing support. Our new name and strengthened identity reflects our future role and vision, as well as our Methodist roots and heritage.”

Increasing impact

As part of the charity’s plans to increase its impact in the future, today it also launched a new initiative to help churches and faith-based organisations in poor communities to effectively meet the needs of their neighbours. Over five years, this aims to reach one million people with sustainable long term support, through the efforts of one thousand churches across ten countries.

”Our new Church **CAN** (Church Community Action for Neighbours) initiative builds on **All We Can’s** existing strengths in partnering with small local organisations, by working in collaboration with churches and offering training and support so that they can effectively respond to the needs of their local communities.”

The initiative will focus on Methodist church partners in developing countries, and has been developed in co-operation with the World Church Relationships team of the Methodist Church in Britain.

Going where the need is greatest

All We Can has always been committed to reaching the most marginalised people where the need is greatest, and will continue to focus on communities which are often overlooked and underserved by larger agencies.

Revd Dr Martyn Atkins, General Secretary of the Methodist Church in Britain, said: “John Wesley famously said ‘Go not only to those that need you, but to those that need you most.’ One of the important things about **All We Can** through its history has been the focus upon people truly on the margins. Methodists have great resonance with that idea that you listen to people who no one else seems to care about, and yet make enormous differences to their lives.”

Do all you can

British Methodism has always had a strong commitment to social justice and practical compassion, and **All We Can** continues to reflect those values. The charity is using the launch of **All We Can** to invite Methodists to renew their commitment to doing all they can to contribute to the alleviation of poverty and speak out against injustice.

Tim Baker, a volunteer coordinator for **All We Can** in the Thames Valley Circuit, said: “**All We Can** is about doing all that I can, all that we can, all that the people involved in the charity and in Methodism can do to bring about a better, safer, less broken world.”

Ealing Trinity Circuit

At the moment **MRDF (All We Can)** does not feature very highly in the charities supported in the Circuit – with only a small number of churches regularly contributing or being involved. It may be because YOU need to know more about what the charity has done, is doing and wants to do but can only with more active support.

All We Can provides a wealth of material for study groups, including 'lota', which is an award winning multimedia course that looks at the causes of poverty and global injustice.

As Co-ordinator for the Circuit let me know what I can do to make your church, or group, aware of the work that **All We Can** is doing, perhaps by sourcing study or reference materials or arranging for a multimedia presentation to be given to your church or group or as part of a Sunday service.

MWiB - London District, Past President's Report 2012-2013

Blossom Jackson, Past President MWiB

2012-2013, that marked my final and second year, as president, was no less eventful than the previous year, as the movement progressed through its initial stage as the newly fledged women's movement - Methodist Women in Britain [MWiB].

The commissioning of the second president and the launch of the new 'butterfly' logo at last year's conference held in London, has not only marked an important milestone in the connectional movement that is also the British Unit of the World Federation of Methodists and UniWorking on committees - Discipleship, Health and Wellbeing and the Gender Forum, but also has enabled me to share ideas and contribute to policies that can affect the vision and life of the church. It is to be noted that, regarding the Gender Toolkit currently being prepared along with others, it is anticipated that these will be ready for presentation in time for next year's conference.

Of equal, but different involvement has been my link with the Government Equality Office and being able to circulate the regular news flashes they send that affect the lives of women from UN levels, to parliamentary decisions. This culminated with my attendance in London for a video link with the UN on Britain's response to the 'Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women' (CEDAW). It is therefore gratifying to see that following this session that although the UK is making its first prosecution against a doctor for female genital mutilation.

The biennial weekend away conference 'Because You're Worth It' held at Highleigh in the summer provided an interesting programme and much food for thought. We were pleased that the District was able to fund the equivalent of three places.

My final task was to ensure that role descriptions for those holding offices were prepared and agreed by the executive, from church to presidential levels. This I anticipate should act as guidelines that can be reviewed and updated each year as individuals carry out their roles.

My current role is primarily advisory and I have also attended forums when Rev. Femi Cole-Njie has not been able to attend because of other urgent commitments. Next year, by election and agreement I have accepted the appointment as the next District Forum representative.

MWIB, has evolved to a 'butterfly with wings' and a force for good within our church. Its Ideals are sound and in my opinion, anyone who is involved, needs to embrace it for the good of all. It will not, however grow, without a recognition of its goals and commitment to hard work. The challenge is to attract other women into the movement. However, it would seem to me that where the work is vibrant, ministers understand the goals, recognise the value of the work and do give encouragement and support. Where this is not apparent, the 'butterfly' cannot take flight or may even bump around in an unrelenting road, which is not our vision. My prayer is that the movement can grow through God's grace. To that extent MWIB, at both macro and micro levels, not only enables us to confirm our Methodist identity, but also aims at enabling, equipping and encouraging women in our churches, the communities in which we live and worldwide, to be true disciples of Christ.

I contend that the beating heart of the movement is at church, Circuit and District levels, where policy direction from the leadership executive team and forum, informs the way forward for growing the movement. This is where the nitty gritty of the work to be done is carried work and this requires commitment, sharing of skills, growing in grace and respecting and valuing the skills that each of us have to offer. I have been privileged to work with women, connexionally, in a manner, I could not hitherto have imagined and for this I will be eternally grateful.

The year began with the thanksgiving service' for 'More than Gold' in central London, where it was acknowledged that the 2012 Games marked the world's largest church engagement in an Olympics. I was glad that so many people in the Methodist Church were able to support me as I took on the role of Athletes Family Homestay coordinator on behalf of the church. Attendance in Glasgow for the legacy event in November 2012 was no less inspirational, and enabled us to share our Olympic journey and contribute to the pre-planning for the impending Commonwealth Games, in Scotland.

Visiting the three Sectors, either for meetings, or participating in services and District events has enabled me to meet more and more people, across the District and at every event, I was also able to share earn new things.

Prime Minister's Questions

King's Hall (afternoon) congregation recently successfully lobbied for a question to be put at Prime Minister's Question Time. The question put to David Cameron related to the persecution of Christians in various countries in the world where they often face extreme pressure. Congratulations to the congregation for their initiative!

A Student in Arms

Gerald Barton, Editor

This year, as I'm sure you are all aware sees the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War. Remembered as the most devastating and industrialised war up to that time, it touched the lives of practically every family in the land. Around 1,080,000 service personnel from the British Empire were killed in the conflict – about 12% of those who served. My maternal grandfather's family lost two brothers – one killed in action in Mesopotamia in 1916 and one died of wounds in France in 1917. Since four brothers served, that's a very high loss.

When I was a student at Exeter, I found a book titled 'A Student in Arms' in a second-hand bookshop for the princely sum of 12p. It contained a collection of articles written by Donald Hankey for Spectator magazine and published under the pseudonym 'Student'. These articles described various aspects of army life and also Hankey's reflections on the war and its impact on society and the church.

Donald Hankey enlisted as a private soldier in the Rifle Brigade at the start of the war, but transferred to the Royal Garrison Artillery and was promoted to the rank of Second Lieutenant. He subsequently transferred again to the 1st Royal Warwickshire Regiment. Reading his articles, it is clear that he was a devout Christian who had considered joining the Anglican priesthood. The war intervened, however and like many others he volunteered for the army. He was also wounded at some point, but returned to active service after he had recovered. He was killed in action at the age of 31 during the prolonged battle of the Somme on 12th October 1916.



2nd Lt Donald Hankey

Hankey found army life a levelling experience – ‘an experiment in democracy’ as he put it. Men from all walks of life volunteered together and, as a well-educated man he rubbed shoulders with ordinary labourers as well as bank clerks, shop assistants, and ‘gentlemen’. Gradually, each found his level. As he put it, *“The plausible were promoted, found wanting, reduced and replaced by men of real grit and force of character. Equality of opportunity had been granted, and the inequality of man had been demonstrated.”* Of course, the existence of the officer class proved that it was not a perfect democracy. Many of the officers held their commissions by virtue of property or family influence rather than ability. According to military discipline, which Hankey referred to as ‘ancient religion’, only the officers could think or possess common sense. Should individual officers be lacking in those abilities, it was, however acceptable for sergeants, or at times other NCO's or even privates to exercise those functions provided it was done through the officers, thus preserving the integrity of the military hierarchy.

It was at the front, through actual experience of war that the best men came to the fore and the best qualities of the average man revealed. Officers and men were welded together in closer comradeship by their shared dangers and discomforts. *“One sees men as God sees them, apart from externals such as manner and intonation.One danger and discomfort after another you share in common till you love him (your comrade) as a brother.”*

Hankey mused on whether men would remember what they had learnt in the trenches when they returned home. Would they remember that it is not riches or possessions that set men apart, but that the qualities of the heart – courage, honesty, charity and practical ability, are the real distinguishers between men? Should those things be remembered, he thought that England would be a new and better place. *“In those days charity and brotherly love shall prevail mightily, for all shall have learnt mutual understanding and respect.”* Whilst he wished it might be so, he thought it more likely that the lessons would be forgotten and men slip back into their old grooves.

Rubbing shoulders with ‘ordinary men’ also gave Hankey an understanding of what he called the ‘religion of the inarticulate’. Before the war Hankey had been involved in clubs for working men intended to draw them into the church. What he had found, however was that they could easily discuss things of immediate interest, football for instance, but moving on to deeper topics was problematic – men listened respectfully, but generally kept silent. Army life, kept full by training, fatigues and drill little left time for thought. He realised that the lives of ordinary working men equally left them little time to think. Although barrack life was narrow, he found that although a few men were obsessed by two things – beer and women, for the most part they were ‘good fellows’, intensely loyal to their comrades, ready to share whatever they had with a ‘chum’ and generous to anyone in trouble. It was clear to him that they certainly believed in unselfishness, generosity, charity and humility, but he doubted that they ever connected these virtues with Christianity.

For the ordinary soldier, Christianity consisted in believing a literal interpretation of the Bible, and setting up to be better than your neighbours, which meant not drinking, not swearing, preferably not smoking, being tight with your money, avoiding ‘doubtful characters’ and refusing to accept that they might have any claim upon you. Hankey regarded it as little short of a tragedy that though ordinary soldiers believed absolutely in Christian virtues, they never connected them with Christ. Furthermore, Army chaplains never realised this, thinking that the men’s inarticulateness indicated lack of religion. They did not understand that ordinary soldiers really did have deep-seated beliefs, but that they did not connect them with Christianity as presented by the chaplains.

Hankey also believed that the gulf between the church and the ordinary soldier or working man went deeper. On the whole, he regarded the clergy of the time as being hopelessly out of touch. From what he wrote, it appears that the clergy were not permitted to enlist as combatants. As a result he considered that they could gain little understanding of what the ordinary soldier experienced. Whilst various writers of the time thought that the war presented the church with major opportunities for reaching out to ordinary people, particularly post-war as many men

would return home more serious minded than when they had enlisted, Hankey thought that the church lacked the means to communicate meaningfully with them as its clergy had not shared their experience.

In another article, Hankey wrote about some of his comrades, all decent men who in their different ways had been close to him. Yet only one of them had ever taken Holy Communion beside him. Almost all had little time for the church, but because of their fundamental decency Hankey regarded them as being truly part of the church whether they knew it or not. The church, he felt simply failed to connect with such men and risked becoming an irrelevance unless it found ways of speaking to them in a language they could understand and relate to. For rather different reasons, the church faces similar problems today. Many people today seek a deeper, spiritual meaning to their lives, but by and large do not look to the church to guide them. Like the ordinary soldier Hankey wrote about, they do not see the church as having any relevance or anything much to offer in their quest.

Hankey did not, of course spend all his time criticising the church in his articles. He wrote about many other aspects of service life including the impact it had on his own faith. "An Englishman Prays" was written in the third person although it is too personal to be talking about anyone but Hankey himself. Before the war he had always said his prayers. For him they had been a kind of 'squaring of his accounts, morally'. He was not, however in the least a mystic and in his prayers he had never felt the reality of God. For him, 'God' was more a principle of goodness than a being of infinite power and intimate importance.

When he enlisted Hankey continued to say his prayers, partly because his fellow soldiers didn't. To begin with, he expected to be laughed at but found that after the first time no-one took any notice. However, he found it very difficult and couldn't focus his mind on his prayers. Being ignored weakened his resolve and eventually he forgot to say them and simply stopped. Somehow, not praying didn't seem to make any difference. His religion had been like a 'window opening onto the unknown and the unexplored'. He sort of felt there was something there and had even caught a sense of it from time to time. However, he had never had the energy or the faith to explore what might be there. He sometimes regretted this, but didn't do anything about it.

When he arrived at the front, he did pray, mainly that he would not be found wanting. He just drifted on, however doing his bit like all the other men with, at times not too good a grace. He was asked to accept promotion, but at first refused. He didn't see why he should accept more responsibility than his comrades, but put the question to his conscience 'with an eye', as he put it 'to the Christ-man in whom he had almost ceased to believe'. To his great astonishment he got an answer – a sentence that flashed across his mind, "Strengthen My brethren". He was staggered by this, but he felt he knew what it meant. He felt he should stop whining about his failures and accept this as a sign of forgiveness. He took the promotion after all, and became a father to the boys in his section.

The final stage of this journey came later after a charge, undertaken in broad daylight. He was wounded in the arm and leg by a shell and had fallen in 'no man's land'. He watched the remnants of his company retire to their trench before a hail of bullets. As he lay in the long grass his mind became obsessed by one thought – would anyone come out to find him when it was dark or would he be left to die? Eventually he lost consciousness. When he awoke it was dark apart from the occasional flare or a random shot. He had lost a lot of blood, but the pain had ceased and he just lay there feeling strangely peaceful.

As he lay there, he began to wonder about the meaning of everything. Looking up at the stars everything seemed to small and petty. All the bloodshed seemed to be just the useless strife of petty creatures. He felt very alone, cut-off from his fellow men, as if he was on an immense sea without any bearings. Eternity and infinity seemed cold and pitiless. The stars looked down, but only with cold unseeing indifference. But then, he felt he had the advantage of them – at least he could feel, could suffer. He was aware of his own existence and could even gauge his own insignificance. There was in him something that was not in them, unless it was everywhere. "God!" he whispered. "God everywhere!" Then a new phrase came to him, "Underneath are the everlasting arms." This phrase repeated itself like a chant and he felt contented.

When the moon went down, his comrades came to fetch him. Although he could never be as sound of limb as he had been before, there remained in his memory and his heart something that could make him a staunch fighter in other fields. As he put it, "*He had found a new way of prayer, and the courage that is born of a faith well-founded.*"

The Truth about Noah's Ark

Donald Burling, Acton Hill

It's such a pretty story, often illustrated in children's picture books - all those animals walking in pairs up the gangplank into a huge ship with a house on the top. If we look a little closer it may seem less pretty - a flood that wipes out all humanity apart from a chosen few is disturbing. At a time when floods have been in the news, it may give us food for thought.

Did it really happen? Those who do not believe in miracles will answer, "Of course not". For someone to know years in advance that a global flood was coming, to build such a large vessel with the limited technology of the time, and finally to collect together animals of every species and persuade them to come on board, certainly strains credibility. Yet, apart from the Bible, is there any reason to think the story might be true?

In fact there is. First of all, the story with variations is found in the folklore of peoples around the world from China and the South Sea Islands to North and

South America. The Roman poet Ovid wrote of a man named Deucalion who was warned by his father, the minor god Prometheus, to build a box-like boat so that he and his wife could escape the wrath of Jupiter. Recently there has been interest in a clay tablet from Nineveh which describes in some detail a huge round coracle made of palm fibre rope coated with bitumen, into which the animals entered two by two. Several of the legends mention the raven and the dove sent out to check whether the flood was really over. Many archaeologists would admit that such a flood must have taken place, even if it covered only the plain of the Tigris and Euphrates.

Secondly a number of people have claimed to have found remains of the Ark in various places. Obviously they cannot all be right. The traditional site is Mount Ararat, a two peaked volcanic mountain on the border between Armenia and Turkey. Its taller peak is a little higher than Mont Blanc, the highest mountain in the Alps. Between 1952 and 1969 a French former soldier Fernand Navarra made several visits to the Turkish side of the mountain, and brought back samples of ancient worked timber. Experts identified these as some kind of oak. His story is told in the book "Noah's Ark - I touched it" (Logos International 1974).

There is on the side of the mountain at a height of about 6,500 ft, a boat-shaped scar clearly visible on aerial photographs. In 1960 an American party visited the site and did some digging, but came to the conclusion that it was just an odd geological formation. But, a young American named Ron Wyatt who read the story was not convinced. Seventeen years later he and his family visited the mountain and managed to find the place - though that in itself was something of a miracle.

In 1987, following a number of further investigations, the site was recognised by the Turkish Government and the area made a National Park with a visitors' centre although this has since been closed.

Wyatt maintains that at 515 ft long the formation conforms to the length of the ark as described in Genesis (assuming Egyptian rather than Hebrew cubits). He also maintains that he found convincing evidence of the structure of the ark as well as artefacts (rivets etc) that could have been used in its construction. However some have denounced Wyatt, who also claims to have made a number of other remarkable discoveries, as a fraud, so it is not clear exactly what the truth of the matter is.

The story is tantalizing and further details can be found at www.arkdiscovery.com, but further investigation is clearly required in order to understand the true nature of the site. However, a permit to excavate the site of the ark has never been issued by the Turkish government, preventing its thorough archaeological investigation. In any event, before excavation can take place a building must first be constructed over the entire 515 ft. long structure, with the entire project estimated to cost \$3-4 million. To date, funding for such a project has not been secured.

Editor's note: The final two paragraphs have been added by the editor

HANWELL METHODIST CHURCH

Church Road, Hanwell, London, W7 1DJ

Saturday 14th June
in our Church
2:30pm – 5:30pm



If you go down to the
Church that day you'll be
sure of a big surprise!

It will be a...

All bears welcome,
young or old!

Refreshments
Cakes/Crafts/Games
Magic and more

Admission: FREE

Teddy Bears' Picnic



For more information
about our Church and the events
we have planned, visit our website
www.hanwellmethodist.info

Remember – Summer 2014

Compiled by Mary Newman, Pitshanger

A prayer for every day this summer

Heavenly Father, we thank you for all the joys of summer, for the warmth of the sun and for the opportunity to spend time in the open air. We thank you for the lovely parks we take for granted; for holidays by the sea, relaxing in the country and maybe to travel far away places.

Forgive us for the times we are too busy to praise you. We thank you that even when we forget you, we remain in your loving care. **Amen**

Man proposes, God disposes

This was a favourite saying of a woman I know when I was a child and I was never quite sure what was meant by it. Years later I have often thought about the truth of those words; never more so than what I am going to tell you.

A lovely lady, Dorothy and her husband used to come to Pitshanger. One of their children, Brian, had Downs Syndrome. After her husband died, as she got older, Dorothy found it increasingly difficult to care for Brian, who was by now in his forties.

I was a social worker for children and adults with severe learning disabilities and one day Joanna Bell, the Ealing Mencap worker with whom I worked very closely, contacted me. "Mary", she said, "You know Dorothy, don't you? I've tried many times to persuade her to let Brian go into a home where he will be looked after. A vacancy has come up in a Mencap home in Culmington Road and I think Brian would be very happy there. I've tried so hard to persuade Dorothy without success and wonder if you would go and see her. I'm afraid the place in Culmington Road will be taken by someone else, if she doesn't make her mind up soon."

Well, I did go to see Dorothy and she told me she couldn't bear the thought of parting with Brian. She cared so much about him and was worried he wouldn't be happy away from her. However, she said she would think about it.

Just days later Joanna Bell rang me. She told me she knew I had been to see Dorothy. I was shocked to hear that Brian had come home from the Day Centre and while Dorothy was in the kitchen getting his tea she heard a sudden crash. She went into the lounge and found Brian had died from a heart attack.

Sad as this was, what a blessing that Dorothy never had to make that painful decision!

If you think about it you may have some other examples of the saying "Man proposes God disposes."

Lord Jesus Christ,,
Our rock and our redeemer,
You are the strength of your people
And the source of their radiance.

Send your Spirit upon us;
Instruct us in the ways we should go,
And lead us into the abundance of your riches

We wait in hope on you, O God;
Our hearts rejoice in you,
For we trust in your holy name. Amen

(A prayer from the Diocese of Winchester Conference inspired by Psalm 18-34)

Forgiving and Forgetting

As Christians, we are told to forgive people who mistreat us in any way “70 times 70”. I expect that most of us try to do this. As humans, though, isn’t it much harder to forget? Things that happened to upset us long ago still come into our minds when we least expect them. Sometimes these are things we can’t forget that we ourselves have done or failed to do, like a hospital visit we intended to make but left it until it was too late.

It is comforting to know that God not only forgives but also forgets those things we do wrong. What a lovely verse we read in Hebrews Chapter 8 v 12

**“I will forgive their sins
And will no longer remember their wrongs”**

Sometimes our newspapers seem to be lacking in good news, but recently I was touched by the lovely story of Dan Black.

Dan was paralysed from the waist down and also lost the use of his right arm in a cycling accident 5 years ago. Since then he has been raising money for pioneering stem cell treatment, which could one day help him walk again. Dan, now aged 25 years, lives in a home near Chepstow, where he receives 24 hour care. He uses a wheel chair to get around.

Dan had raised £20,000 when he heard about 5 year old Brecon Vaughan, who was born with a rare form of cerebral palsy. He had 3 operations by the time he was 13 months old. Brecon’s family are desperately trying to raise £60,000 towards a procedure which can be done in America.

When Dan heard about Brecon he gave the £20,000 he had raised to the little boy’s family, so that one day Brecon may learn to walk. Dan said, “I’m incredibly grateful to everyone who has helped me out but this boy needs it more than I do at the

moment. It would make me very happy to see the difference it could make to Brecon's life."

Brecon's father expressed his thanks in the words: "I don't think it is even possible to say how grateful we are, or to put into words what it means. It is incredible. How do you ever start saying thank you for something like that?"

A Prayer for Those in Need

Heavenly Father, we remember all who are in a special need for our prayer.

We pray for the sick, for the disabled and for those who care for them.

We pray for those who have been bereaved and for single parents who may be struggling to bring up children on their own.

We pray for children who have lost a parent through death, separation or divorce and for all children in the care of the local authorities.

We pray for all who have been injured in the Armed Forces and we thank you for the courage of those who have lost limbs and yet still go on to living fulfilling lives.

Remember Every Evening in Summer

The Lord watches over you,
The Lord is your shade at your right hand:
The sun will not harm you by day,
Nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep
You from all harm – he will watch over your
Coming and going both now and forever more.

Psalm 121 v 5-8

Readings for Summer

The Peace of God - Philippians 4 v 6-7

Christ's Invitation – Matthew 11 v 28-30

The Lord's Answer to Prayer - Psalm 34 v 4-5

The Compassion of God – 2 Corinthians 1 v 3-4

Circuit Directory Update

Forthcoming Events around the Circuit

[as notified to, or discovered by, the Editor]

June

- 1st Sun 6.30pm **Easter Offering Service at Pitshanger**
- 1st Sun 4.30pm **Circuit Membership Course begins**
- 11th Thur 8.00pm **Circuit Meeting at Acton Hill**
- 14th Sat 2.30pm **Hanwell Teddy Bears' Picnic**
5.30pm *Admission free – all bears welcome, young or old!*

July

- 5th Sat 10.00am **Kingsdown Book Fair with stalls**
12.30pm *All proceeds to Anglo-Caribbean Society*
- 20th Sun 6.30pm **Circuit Service at Kingsdown**
Service will include a farewell for Revd Chrissie Howe

August

None advised

Articles for '**In-touch**' Issue No 69 (June - August) should be sent by e-mail headed '**In-touch**' to the Editor, **Gerald Barton**, or as hard copy to the Circuit Office.

Ealing Trinity Circuit Office
Kingsdown Methodist Church, Kingsdown Ave, West Ealing, London W13 9PR
office@ealingtrinity.org.uk

Office hours: Tues & Thurs 09.00 – 14.00

Deadline for next issue: 1st August