

THE METHODIST CHURCH - WEST DEVON CIRCUIT NEWSLETTER - AUGUST 2020

Welcome to a new type of Newsletter that will run until the Circuit can get back to normal. Its distribution poses problems and the management would like somebody in each church in the Circuit to be responsible for either forwarding it on to other members in their church or printing a copy of it to hand to members who do not have a computer of their own.

I would also ask that if you have items for inclusion in this newsletter to submit it in a typed format or to get it typed by a friend if you are unable to type it for yourself.
Editor

Giving during Lockdown.

When I wrote to church treasurers 3 months ago many people imagined everything would 'get back to normal' fairly quickly, no gatherings for worship have been possible so far, and this situation may continue in our chapels for several more months. Many good things are happening. Perhaps our opportunities to witness, to serve, and to grow God's Kingdom (see Circuit Mission Statement) are greater than for many years.

But our traditional way of giving money – via the collection plate – has not been possible. Circuit staff has continued to work extremely hard developing new initiatives and sustaining pastoral contacts, so roughly the same funding is needed. It is important that churches are able to pay their contributions toward circuit funds, as well as maintain their local commitments.

Many members have set up Bank Standing Orders or passed cash/cheques to their church treasurers for banking. I encourage everyone to speak to your church treasurer. You would need just 3 details about the church bank account to set up a monthly Standing Order at your bank Account Name, Account Number, Sort Code. Of course, a Standing Order can be canceled at any time, but current guidance suggests it will not be possible to pass round a collection plate even when churches reopen.

Alan Partridge, Circuit Treasurer.
01837 54397

Dear Friends

I was recently reminded of the meaning of the word PANDEMIC. It comes from the Greek PAN meaning **all** and DEMOS meaning **people** or **population**. It would certainly seem to be the case that this latest pandemic, COVID -19, is affecting all people. Populations across the world, not least our own, are facing what is being termed the 'new normal'. And for hundreds of thousands of people life will never be the same again because a loved one has died or because having COVID-19 has resulted in life-changing physical and mental aftereffects. And the cause of all this has not gone away – in India where a total lockdown early on in this crisis seemed to have prevented the spread of the virus there is now a rapidly growing daily increase in the number of positive cases, and I ask you to please keep praying for our brothers and sisters in the Diocese of Cuttack where the measures being put in place to control and contain the spread do not seem to be working.

Things here at home seem to have relaxed somewhat but as the experience in India shows and, indeed, that of Leicester, we are not free from COVID-19. As we now move towards thinking about how we might reopen our buildings we need to do so with the care and safety of all people in mind. As we seek God's guidance and look to do all that is needed of us to provide spaces that meet the requirements asked of us, we should be asking ourselves – what is the right thing to do to keep people safe? I recall the story of the early church in Antioch (Acts 11) – a cosmopolitan church with people from many nationalities. When they hear from the prophet Agabus that there is to be a great famine over the whole world their response isn't to blame others, or, indeed, to blame God. No, they simply ask three basic questions: who is going to be at special risk when this happens? What can we do to help? And who shall we send?

Perhaps these questions should continue to influence our thinking as we journey forward into the unknown place that is called 'new normal'.

Every blessing
Liz

Circuit News

Church reopening

There are three churches in the Circuit currently exploring the possibility of reopening in August/September. Much work is going on 'behind the scenes' to enable this to happen as risk assessments, social distancing requirements, and the necessary cleaning regimes all have to be in place. The congregation of each church will be advised once a date to reopen has been set. The 'At Home' services will continue to be distributed and will become a regular part of the worship life of the Circuit.

Local preachers

Alison Morgan has successfully completed her local preacher training and we offer her our congratulations on this achievement. Alison will remain as a preacher 'On Trial' until such time as we can hold a Circuit Service at which she will be formally admitted as a Local Preacher in the Methodist Church – we pray that may happen soon!

A poem (sent in by Liz)

When young-leafed June is summoned by the sun,
And new-mown grass breathes fragrance through the air,
When work is over, holidays begun,
May peace and pleasure in themselves be prayer.
And in your leisure may you hear the one
Who is your blessing and by whom you are blest
Still calling you: *Come unto me and rest.*

*Poem by Malcolm Guite published in After Prayer
(Canterbury Press)*

Old age is:- Anyone can grow old gracefully, it takes imagination to grow old disgracefully

INFUSION

Hi all,
Well, this year has panned out differently from what we had planned. During the pandemic, we, the Infusion Team, have been continuing to adapt as restrictions have changed from only leaving the house to drop off a Creative Station box in a nearby village to be able to return to Okehampton College with Connect a few days a week to support the year groups returning and key worker's children.
There have been lots going on so we've decided to share some of the highlights with you! To find out more about



all the activities or about how to join in, see the contact details and website at the bottom.

Sunday Slot – Every Sunday at 10am

Sunday Slot is an opportunity for whole families to engage with each other on a Sunday. The session includes a story, some singing and dancing, and some activities that you can complete from the comfort of your own home. We've had families join from across the circuit and those from our ecumenical links. We will continue to run this for as long as needed until guidance allows Sunday Schools and Youth Groups to return and when families choose to do so.

Online Bible Study – First Sunday of Every Month at 4pm

The Online Bible Study is a chance for 15-18 year-olds to grab a drink and snacks, play some games and, to explore the bible together over Zoom. We have been



running this alongside Ruth Jones, the Holsworthy Community Christian Youth Chaplain and the young people have enjoyed beating Sarah at a variety of games!

Online Kree8 – Third Sunday of Every Month at 7pm

Kree8 is our monthly youth service with food, games, a message, and a chance to catch up. Whilst we cannot meet in Halwill to do this, we have been continuing with a shorter session with some at home games, challenges, and messages from the team.

Creative Station

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Throughout lockdown and into the summer holidays we have been working with Winkleigh, Halwill, and Hatherleigh Churches Together to provide their communities with a variety of bundles of FREE resources and treats for families to collect, engage with, explore and enjoy in their own homes. These resources are free and are designed for primary school-aged children, to help families to reflect on topics and themes.

With its popularity, having packed and delivered around 510 2 children bags to date, we have also started to provide the resource online to share with communities we are unable to deliver physical packs to. See an example at <https://spark.adobe.com/page/eNqBrSvKLHkZ4/>

Creative Station+

After consulting parents and running some trial projects, it was decided that instead of running an online holiday club, an extra special Creative Station would be more suitable. Therefore, part-way through the holidays, we will be releasing an extra special Creative Station with 3 or 4 stories with crafts and extra suggestions of home activities. To also reach the wider circuit, we will be contacting local groups we would usually meet with and take a small number of orders for them to circulate. If you would like a few bags for children in your area, please do contact Sarah.

School Care Packages

With schools having changed dramatically and frequently and with us being unable to visit for RE:TREAT sessions and playground visits, we felt that they needed some care from their Christian communities. Therefore, we contacted representatives of each school's Christian Community and arranged 1 bar of chocolate and can of fizzy for each member staff to be delivered to the school. We also included a card from the Christian Community letting the staff know we are thinking of them, appreciating everything that they are having to do and holding them in our prayers. We have managed to facilitate this for all the staff at Northlew C of E School, Hatherleigh Community Primary School, Bridestowe Primary School, Halwill Primary School, Boasley Cross Primary School, Highampton Community Primary School, Lew Trenchard C of E Primary School, Lydford Primary School and Exbourne C of E School. Schools have been really appreciative and have got in touch to say thank you!

See you soon,

The Infusion Team

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<http://www.westdevonmethodists.org.uk/coronavirus-support/children-families-and-youth-infusion>.