

**THE METHODIST CHURCH
BANBURY CIRCUIT NEWSLETTER
MARCH 2012**

Journeying On

Rev Rob Anning, Superintendent Minister, writes:

By the time the March Newsletter is published, we will be into the first weeks of Lent. We will have begun our journey towards Easter, preparing ourselves to share the same journey that Jesus took to the Cross and Resurrection.

There is, in the journey that Jesus took, something about the inevitability of the human life: we are constantly on the move, journeying to a destination, and consequently, we are always surrounded by change. This is reflected in the Christian tradition of pilgrimage.

On the whole I find most people dislike change. We like the security of where we are, what we have become used to. But of all people, we as Christians should be able to acknowledge that change is inevitable and we can journey on in the secure knowledge that while change surrounds us, and we constantly change, we believe in an unchanging God. The Psalmist writes (71v3): “. . . you are my rock and my fortress” summing up something of his understanding of the nature of God.

Our Banbury Circuit is not immune from change. Already, the Circuit Meeting has agreed that in order to keep our budget in check, we will reduce our staffing of Ministers (Presbyters) to two in September 2014. This means we have just over two years to think through how we re-order our shape, how we work together, what we need to do to ensure we remain a viable, vibrant Circuit.

This will involve some radical thinking and open discussions if we are to find the way forward and carry everyone with us. We will need to be open and honest with each other. To speak our minds whilst at the same time, listen to other points of view. We will need to think through what kind of skills, gifts and talents we will need in our Ministers in the years ahead.

The Circuit Leadership Team will be discussing some thoughts and ideas during this coming Spring, and intend to bring a discussion paper to the Circuit Meeting in order to involve as many people as possible in plotting our way forward. I ask you all to engage with this process in a positive way, recognising that a part of God’s creation is the inevitability of change and travel. We need to take this journey on together.

TEAM PREACHING

All preachers in training conclude their initial studies with a project. Ian Hearle chose the topic of team preaching and below is the text of the presentation about it which he made to the December Preachers' Meeting. The preachers felt it was important to share this with the Circuit and expressed a willingness to "have a go" at team preaching. If any church would like to take up this offer from the preachers please let Rev. Rob Anning or your minister know.

The topic I've chosen is Team Preaching, also known as Themed Preaching, Themed Team Preaching, Tag Team Preaching, and several other variations on the theme! The concept of Team Preaching is where several Local Preachers, and/or Ministers and potentially Worship Leaders too, get together to prepare and take a series of services, probably in one church, or possibly across the circuit, on a particular theme. I would anticipate that the first foray into Team Preaching would be at a single church, one which would have been identified by the team as being open and appropriate to the concept, or perhaps which had identified itself in coming forward and requesting such an approach to a series of services. The theme itself could be on any number of topics, ranging from a season such as Lent or Advent, to books of the Bible, perhaps the I am sayings of Jesus, or how about spirituality in films – think of Chocolat, or perhaps The King's Speech.

As a Circuit, I'm not aware that Team or Themed Preaching has been used in the past – please correct me if I'm wrong – and I understand that the nearest we get to it is when a Local Preacher conducts a single service off-Lectionary. I do know that Local Preachers do use Worship Leaders once in a while, but my experience, both as a Worship Leader and a nearly admitted Local Preachers is that it is more on the occasional "can you do the prayers on such-and-such a topic, or do this reading" rather than meeting and actually planning a service together. There is no doubt that such team-working will increase the amount of time required to prepare a service, and we're all short of time, and it will take a number of people out of their comfort zones, but there are a number of advantages. Service preparation can be a lonely, solo occupation, but the opportunity to spontaneously bounce ideas, themes, approaches, sources etc may be liberating for many spiritually, in knowledge and in methodology.

In discussing with a congregation in advance what they want of a series of sermons, we would be becoming truly local preachers again as opposed to preachers who live not too far away. The Faith and Worship course encourages those learning to preach to take account of the 'nature of the congregation' in terms of its age, ethnic composition etc., but I'm talking about something far more fundamental than that - the MISSION of the congregation, the way in which worship is a means of grace, and what the congregation is hoping for from its encounter with God's Word through the Local Preacher in worship.

When we bring our own perspectives to bear on whatever it is that the Church is trying to explore or promote as part of its mission and outreach, I think Local Preachers can add to the richness of grace. But of course to achieve that fusion of our calling and the congregation's growth in grace and holiness means that a Local Preacher has to spend time with a congregation BEFORE we preach to them, BEFORE we have decided what it is we think we want to say to them.

The individual church will benefit not only in having a service truly focussed on its needs, but evidence suggests that:

- During a relatively short series people could hold in their memories each of the messages.
- Exploring, for an example a relatively little-known OT book will enhance peoples' Biblical knowledge and make them hungry to learn more.
- Continuity is welcome and stabilising.
- Tying house group materials with the Bible passages preached on, will further enhance the feeling of belonging and sharing.

I appreciate that there are practical implications to implementing Team Preaching – a new approach to the Plan, having each member of the team available for a succession of Sundays, special services to be catered for, and particular church requirements. But I would say, give it a go! I would ask who on our list of Local Preachers would like to be involved, and from there, develop a brief questionnaire for churches as to whether any would like this. We would need to have a Planning meeting where everyone can discuss a possible theme and also the size of teams – anecdotally I've heard three per team works well, but we may prefer anything from 2 upwards! And at the end of the series we'd need to have an Evaluation meeting because we need to know what worked and what didn't work.

More meetings – but we are Methodists aren't we? – More time required, change – all reasons not to look any further at it. But counter that with something fresh on the circuit, a different approach answering a congregation's specific request, and the opportunity for some of us to work together, as a team rather than individually, learning from and encouraging each other, so that both congregation and Local Preacher – and God's work – benefit.

PREACHERS' LIBRARY

The Preachers' Library is a growing collection of donated and purchased books selected by Hazel, with the preparation of worship in mind. The Library is situated in the vestry at Marlborough Road and so can be accessed whenever the church is open and services are not actually taking place. There is a blue spotty book for logging out borrowed books and a box for any donated literature. Anyone calling into The Mustard Seed will find the church open; that's Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, and times around worship.

CIRCUIT SERVICES

Rev. Tom Stuckey, former President of the Conference will lead a Saturday seminar on the Holy Spirit on 12th May and preach at the Circuit Service on 13th May (10.30am at Marlborough Road).

The Easter Offering dedication service this year will also be at 10.30am at Marlborough Road on 24th June.

Other Circuit services are at Greatworth, at 6pm on 22nd July and the Covenant Service at Marlborough Road at 10.30am on 2nd September.

HANDING ON THE TORCH

This year's Lent Study. Christianity is the largest movement our world has ever seen. It continues to grow at an immense pace – especially in Asia (including China), Africa and Latin America. At the same time, Christianity in the West struggles to grow and – perhaps – even to survive. In this course we consider some of the reasons for this and what it might mean for individual Christians, for churches and for Western culture, in a world where alternative beliefs are increasingly on offer.

5 sessions on Tuesday afternoons, 2.30pm to 4pm at Marlborough Road, to be led by Rev Rob Anning:

Tuesday, 28th February: Session 1 – A Christian Country?

Tuesday, 6th March: Session 2 – A Secular Society?

Tuesday, 13th March: Session 3 – A Beleaguered Church?

Tuesday, 20th March: Session 4 – Competing Creeds?

Tuesday, 27th March: Session 5 – Handing on the Torch

If you are planning to attend, and haven't signed up at Marlborough Road, if possible please let Rob Anning know by telephoning 01295 262602 or e-mail robert.anning@btinternet.com but don't worry if you make a last-minute decision to attend. The course booklets this year cost £3.25, an ecumenical course for enquiring minds.

HOW TO USE POWERPOINT

This practical workshop on how to use the presentation software Powerpoint will be at Marlborough Road on Tuesday 27th March at 7.30pm and will be led by Ian Philipson. The workshop will include using Powerpoint and how to set up a digital projector. If you have your own laptop computer please bring it with you. If you haven't got your own computer, don't worry, you can still attend. But you will need to book a place if you want to come as places are limited. To book please contact Val Trinder (*contact steward or see paper copy for contact details*)

How to lead a Local Arrangement service will be the next topic covered, probably in April.

CIRCUIT QUIET DAY

Theme: 'A DAY TO LET GOD LOVE YOU'

Venue: Wroxton Methodist Church

Date: Saturday, 14th April 2012

Time: 10.00am - 4.00pm

The cost for the day will be £5. Please bring your own packed lunch. We will 'picnic' together at lunchtime, as we share fellowship. Tea, coffee and biscuits are available throughout the day. There will also be ample opportunity to enjoy a stroll around the village and visit the ducks on the pond! If you would like to book a place, please let me know. I should like to have firm bookings and your contribution towards the cost of the day by, Tuesday, 3rd April.

Dorothy Hewitson

CIRCUIT SUPPER CLUB

Our last supper together and speaker before we break for the summer, will be on Thursday, March 22nd at the usual time of 7 for 7.30pm at Marlborough Road Methodist Church with David Steadman as our speaker giving us the Bletchley Story of code breaking in the second World War.

Please book your place(s) with David Hughes by Monday night, March 19th (*contact steward or see paper copy for contact details*) at the latest, giving David any special dietary requirement. The cost is £8.50 to cover the meal and speakers expenses. It should be another interesting evening.

THE MUSTARD SEED

Following is just a selection of what's new and of especial interest at the shop - do call in and see us and sample for yourself Banbury's Christian Bookshop.

And please don't keep news of the shop to yourselves - to that end we've put together a new a poster which we'd be most grateful if you'd take the time to circulate and display in your church, school, workplace, club, wherever it will help to spread the word! Call, visit, e-mail, text, Facebook or twitter us and we'll gladly let you have a copy

Christian Aid 2012 - HOPE IN THE RUBBLE: STORIES FROM HAITI

Thursday 15th March, 7.30-9.30pm at Marlborough Road Methodist Church

Join us for an inspirational evening with Aldrin Calixte from Christian Aid partner Haiti Survive. Aldrin will share his experiences of tackling poverty in Haiti, before and after the 2010 earthquake. As Christian Aid Week approaches, find out how your support and donations make a difference to the lives of people living in poverty in some of the poorest parts of the world. There will be a simple bring-and-share supper on the evening. If you are able to bring something to share that would be great, but don't worry if this isn't possible. There will be plenty of soup and bread. To book a place contact Amy Merone, or the Mustard Seed (*contact steward or see paper copy for contact details*)

Starting a Fresh Conversation with God.....Barefoot in My Heart Jill Briscoe Price £7.99

The conversations between Jill Briscoe and her Father in Heaven are intimate, warm, and full of surprises. For many years Jill has given herself in obedience to a public ministry which has often been costly and exhausting; in addition, she has an extensive network of family members for whom she feels acutely responsible. To cope with these many pressures, Jill has found joy in stretches of candid, personal, intercessory prayer which form the basis for the conversations in this book. The value of this and her previous books is that we are allowed to eavesdrop: to welcome into our own spiritual lives the warmth that flows from these exchanges, and to learn for ourselves the value and possibilities of such a trusting relationship with the Father. This 40-day devotional is intended to accustom readers to this form of prayer.

With Lent already underway make sure you check out some the many resources available from the Mustard Seed including: Seasonal books Seasonal music Seasonal courses... Finding a Voice ... a new Lent course based on The King's Speech Finding a Voice is a new and original Lent course based on the award winning film The King's Speech by Hilary Brand (who some of you will know from her popular Lent course Christ and the Chocolaterie based on the film Chocolat) the course is based around five weekly group sessions which include extracts from the film, group discussion questions, exercises and mediations. With a compelling and popular film

as its point of reference, this is the Lent resource for those who love film but might not otherwise consider a course of Lent Bible study. £5.99

The Way of the Desert by Andrew Watson

Bishop of Aston, Andrew Watson, takes you on a Lenten journey from Ash Wednesday to Easter Day, from the parting of the Red Sea to Israel's entry into the promised land. Combining these Old Testament scriptures with insight from the Gospels, he reveals the continuing relevance of the exodus story to all who would seek to follow Christ £7.99. Visit www.banburyseed.co.uk to read a sample chapter.

Family Fun for Easter by Jane Butcher

Family Fun for Easter will help you to share the meaning of Lent and Easter with your children in 30 'family moments'. The activities are structured to take you through the season of Lent from Shrove Tuesday to Easter Day, including Mothering Sunday. £4.99.

EASTER CARDS NOW INSTOCK PLUS A 3 FOR 2 PROMOTION ON SEASONAL MATERIAL

The Mustard Seed is a non-denominational Christian Bookshop located at the FRONT of Marlborough Road Methodist Church and is open Thursdays and Fridays between 10am and 5pm, and Saturdays between 10am and 4pm. We look forward to seeing you. Ali, Malc, Jo and Ian 07879 057 401 or email shop@banburyseed.co.uk
Visit us via Twitter (@BanburySeed) or Facebook and on our website at www.banburyseed.co.uk

WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

Coffee morning at Marlborough Road Church 10 – 11.30 am on Thursday 2nd February in aid of Women's World day of prayer.

Women's world day of prayer service will be held on Friday 2nd March 2 pm at Salvation Army Citadel George Street. The service arranged by the women of Malaysia and the theme is Let Justice Prevail. Speaker Hazel Stagg. A warm welcome extended to all.

LECTIONARY READINGS FOR MARCH 2012

March 4th

2nd in Lent

Genesis 17:1 – 7, 15 – 16

Psalms 22:23 – 31

Romans 4:13 – 25

Mark 8:31 – 38

March 18th

4th in Lent

Numbers 21:4 – 9

Psalms 107:1 - 3, 17 – 22

Ephesians 2:1 – 10

John 3:14 – 21

March 11th

3rd in Lent

Exodus 20:1 – 17

Psalms 19

1 Corinthians 1:18 - 25

John 2:13 – 22

March 25th

Passion Sunday

Jeremiah 31:31 – 34

Psalms 51:1 – 12 or

Psalms 119:9 – 16

Hebrews 5: 5 – 10

John 12:20 – 33

CHACOMBE

Coffee Morning

We now have a weekly Coffee Morning held in our Schoolroom. It takes place every Thursday from 10.30am - 12.00 noon and is proving to be very popular. Any monies raised will go to charity. If you happen to be in the area, pop in for a cuppa, piece of homemade cake and lots of chat.

Eggstravaganza

Our annual Eggstravaganza will take place on Saturday March 24th from 11.30am - 2.00pm. The usual attractions will be on offer - homemade soup, snacks, various stalls and an Easter Bonnet competition. Do come along and join in the fun.

Bible Study

These sessions take place at 2.15pm in the home of Joan Boyles and are led by Hazel Stagg. These very popular meetings will finish temporarily to enable people to attend the Lent sessions that are on offer. Bible Study will recommence after Easter. Any queries contact Joan (*contact steward or see paper copy for contact details*).

Women's World Day of Prayer

Friday 2nd March at 1.45 pm. This year it is our turn to host this service. The focus is on Malaysia and Bridget Robb is our speaker. Come along and enjoy it with us - men are very welcome to join us.

HINTON METHODIST & ST MARY'S CHURCH COFFEE MORNINGS WOODFORD HALSE

Gods love is free so is our coffee and tea (And cakes and biscuits!)
You'll be very welcome to come and relax and chat between 10 and 12 o'clock in
Hinton Methodist Church on the first Saturday of every month

HORNTON

Already we are into the third month of 2012 and our fund raising for our Building Project is continuing. We held a table top sale during February, with teas, and our sunshine bags have raised £71.90 since August last year. During this month we are having a soup lunch, 17th March 12 noon – 2 pm. Do come along and enjoy this with us if you are able. There will also be stalls and raffle. Women's World Day of Prayer is on Friday 2nd March, 7.30 pm at Shotteswell Parish Church. Mothering Sunday 18th March this year will be held in Parish Church at 11 am, united service. Palm Sunday 1st April, united service in Chapel, and Good Friday 6th April is also in Chapel at 7 pm led by Deacon Margaret Hale.

Don't forget Jiffy service in Chapel first Sunday in month. Coffee mornings on Fridays 10.30 – 12 noon (which are very well attended) and after School Thursday Club 3.30 – 5 pm.

MARLBOROUGH ROAD THURSDAY CLUB 7.30 pm

1st March – Rev Rob Anning

5th April – Wendy Martin – Talk on training hearing dogs

Enquiries: – Shirley Davies, *(contact steward or see paper copy for contact details)*

MIDDLETON CHENEY LENT GROUP

Hazel is leading a fellowship and study group, **HANDING ON THE TORCH**, meeting at the home of Mrs. Jean Charles. It will take place on Thursday afternoons starting 2.15, 23rd February. There will be five sessions with one Thursday missed out, no meeting on 8th March. Please ask Hazel Stagg for further details. Books are £3.25 each. **HANDING ON THE TORCH** explores the situation of Christianity today in this country and worldwide. *(contact steward or see paper copy for contact details)*

ST. FRANCIS CHURCH, HIGHLANDS, BANBURY

Quiz Night Saturday 3rd March at 7.00pm

£2/person, maximum of 6/team

Bring your own drinks & snacks

All proceeds in aid of the Building fund for the new Church & Community Hall

Further details; *(contact steward or see paper copy for contact details)*

UPPER BODDINGTON

Over the past few years, collections taken at our Chapel Anniversary 'Songs of Praise' evenings have been donated to The Hosannah Childrens Home in India. The Home is in desperate need of more funds so that it can provide new accommodation for the children it takes in as well as well as feeding and educating them. We have decided to hold three Coffee Mornings to raise funds for the Home and invite friends from the Circuit to come and join us for those events. The first coffee morning will be on Saturday, March 10th from 10am -11.30am.in the Chapel schoolroom. There will be a cake stall, bring & buy stall and a good opportunity to chat to friends. The other coffee mornings will be held on Saturday April 14th, and Saturday May 26th, same time same place. Please put these dates in your diaries, and if you feel able to support the work of the Home in India, please come and join us.

CAMEO (Come And Meet Each Other)

We meet on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday afternoons each month except July and August at Marlborough Road at 2.30 pm and welcome Men and Women of any age to share a varied programme.

14th March – Lent Lunch – Rev Steve Barber, Chinese Church Support Ministries

28th March – Rev Dorothy Hewitson

The money we raise goes to the Methodist Church Fund for World Mission.

COME AND MEET US!!!

DEADLINE FOR THE MARCH EDITION

THURSDAY 8TH MARCH

CONTRIBUTIONS TO MARY TANNER,

(contact steward or see paper copy for contact details)

CIRCUIT WEBSITE <http://www.banburycircuit.org.uk/>