

**THE METHODIST CHURCH
BANBURY CIRCUIT NEWSLETTER
March 2013**

Saying “hello” and saying “goodbye”

Rev Rob Anning, Superintendent Minister, writes:

There is no greater contrast in the life of a Minister than to conduct a baptism, in which we give thanks for a new life, and then conduct a funeral, in which we give thanks for a life we have shared. In twenty-odd years of ministry, I have never quite come to terms with that contrast but it serves as a constant reminder that the world in which God has placed us is one of cycles and continuity.

It is also a reminder that we cannot have resurrection without death, we cannot have Easter Day without Good Friday.

In our church life, there is always the same cycle. Someone leaves our church, perhaps to live in another part of the country, or because they are unhappy with the way things are, or because their faith has died, or because their earthly life has come to an end. In most of these cases, there is nothing much we can do, other than to give thanks to God for their lives and their contribution to our church life.

On the other hand, we can do a lot about those who are in search of a church family in which to worship God and find fellowship. Yet how often do our Church Councils have a discussion about how “welcoming” our churches are to the stranger? Perhaps it should be on every agenda, to ensure that we keep it to the fore in our thinking.

The discussion might be around such questions as: “Can someone enter our church without a word of welcome and some help and direction about books, seats, toilets, standing or sitting?” “Can a stranger come and worship in our church and leave without a conversation of some kind?” “Does our building feel welcoming, warm, inviting, confusing?” “Is there something someone can take away which gives information about our weekday activities and who to contact, such as the minister?” “If our worship is cancelled for some reason such as the weather, or sharing worship elsewhere, do we put a notice on the door to say we will be back again next week?” All of these questions, and more, will ensure we have churches which are welcome and warm to the stranger.

It hardly seems like yesterday when we were celebrating Christmas and welcoming Jesus, once again, into our lives and giving thanks to God for his gift of Immanuel. Yet at the end of this month of March, we will return to the season of Easter. We will re-live that final week of Jesus from Palm Sunday to the Cross of Friday, and follow that with celebration once more for a new life, a resurrected life, that means we too can share in eternal life.

I much prefer Easter Week to Christmas. It seems to reflect life as it really is, as I experience it, with all it’s saying “hello” and “goodbye” and in the case of Jesus, saying “hello” once again.

CIRCUIT “GOODBYE” AND “HELLO”

Later this Summer, Rev'd Janet Jackson will be leaving us to join a new Circuit in the Derby area. We are planning a “goodbye” for Janet, which will take place at a Circuit Service on Sunday, 21 July, 6pm at Middleton Cheney Church, followed by refreshments.

Janet will be followed by Rev'd Victoria Bravette, who is coming to join us from 1 September from the Birmingham area. Victoria will be living in the Grimsbury manse, and will have pastoral charge of Grimsbury, Marlborough Road, Neithrop and The Fairway. There will be more about Victoria in a forthcoming Circuit Newsletter.

We are planning to say “hello” to Victoria and make her feel welcome at a special Welcome Service on Wednesday, 4 September, 7.30pm at Marlborough Road Church, when the preacher will be the Chair of District, Rev'd Peter Hancock.

Please make a note of these two dates so that we can ensure we say “goodbye” and “hello” really well.

Rev'd Rob Anning.

LENT STUDIES 2013

There will be a series of five Lent Studies held at Marlborough Road and led by Rev Rob Anning on Tuesday afternoons at 2.30pm: February 19 & 26, March 5, 12 & 19.

This year's theme is “Glimpses of God: Hope for today's world” and again we will be using the York Course material.

The same course will be running at West Court, Grimsbury, on Wednesday afternoons at 2.30pm: February 20 & 27, March 6, 13 & 20.

If at all possible please let Rob Anning (01295 262602) know if you intend to come so sufficient study booklets can be purchased.

LENT GROUP 2013

Hazel would like to invite you to a Lent Group meeting at 2.15 on Wednesdays, February 20th – March 20th; in the Butler's Pantry. Hazel will be using the York Course material, as is Rev. Rob Anning's group in MBR - see above. The course is entitled, **Glimpses of God: Hope for Today's World**. Please join Hazel-or Rob- in these sessions.

CIRCUIT SUPPER CLUB

The Circuit Supper Club meets on 28th March at Marlborough Road Methodist Church at 7 for 7.30 pm. Our speaker is Mr Barry Oxhey who will talk about the RSPB entitled "Sumatra Rain Forest". Do come and bring any friends.

Please book your places by Monday evening, 25th March at the latest with David Hughes (*contact steward or see paper copy for contact details*).

MARCH LECTIONARY READINGS 2013

March 3rd

Isaiah 55:1 – 9
Psalm 63:1 – 8
1 Corinthians 10:1 – 13
Luke 13:1 – 9

March 10th

Joshua 5:9 – 12
Psalm 32
2 Corinthians 5:16 – 21
Luke 15:1 – 3, 11b – 32

March 17th

Isaiah 43:16 – 21
Psalm 126
Philippians 3:4b – 14
John 12:1 – 8

March 24th

Entry into Jerusalem
Luke 19:28 – 40
Psalm 118:1 – 2, 19 – 29

The Passion

Isaiah 50:4 – 9a
Psalm 31:9 – 16
Philippians 2:5 – 11
Luke 22:14 – 23:56
Or Luke 23:1 – 49p

March 31st

Easter Day
Acts 10:34 – 43 or
Isaiah 65:17 – 25
Psalm 118:1 – 2, 14 – 24
1 Corinthians 15:19 – 26
John 18:1 – 19, 42

MUSTARD SEED

HOT OFF THE PRESS ... Former Superintendent Minister of the Banbury Methodist Circuit the Rev Mike Langstaff has put pen to paper and gone into print. His first book, **entitled Nuts and Bolts ... from certainty to faith** is now in stock at The Mustard Seed priced £6.50.

We know we have a number of Stormie Omartian fans and so we wanted to let you know about an exciting delivery we have just received. One of Stormie's newest books '**Lead Me, Holy Spirit**', (published in 2012) is now available as a 7 CD audio book. In **Lead Me, Holy Spirit**, Stormie, invites you to transform your emotions and character by learning to discern God's guidance, blessings and protection given through the presence of his Holy Spirit. She prepares you to receive the inheritance laid up for you as God's child by discovering his will for your life – a life you cannot have without him. The audio book is read by Renee Raudman and is on sale now at just £13.99.

VOLUNTEERS FOR SYNOD

Banbury Circuit is hosting the Spring Synod at Banbury Academy, Ruskin Road on Saturday 27th April 2013. In order for this day to run smoothly, we are looking for volunteers from the Circuit to join rotas to help throughout the day for the following:

CATERING – Setting up, clearing, washing up and serving tea, coffee and soup at certain times during the day, which will run from 9 am to 4 pm approximately. If you can help at all during these times, please contact Pauline and Tony Giles (*contact steward or see paper copy for contact details*)

CAR PARKING – Marshalls needed between 9 am and 10.30 am

ADMINISTRATION – Register those present and issue them with badges between 9 am and 10.30 am

STEWARDS – To welcome and direct visitors between 9 am and 10.30 am

Please contact Cheryl Messer (*contact steward or see paper copy for contact details*) if you can help with any of the last three tasks.

Thanking you in anticipation Cheryl Messer (on behalf of the Circuit Stewards)

CIRCUIT QUIET DAY

The next Quiet Day will be held on Saturday, 11th May from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm. Further details regarding venue, cost and the theme for the day will be available later. In the meantime, you may wish to make a note in your new diary to 'keep the day free'!

Dorothy Hewitson (*contact steward or see paper copy for contact details*)

WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER - FRIDAY. 1 MARCH 2013

This year the service has been arranged by the women of France and the theme is 'I was a stranger and you welcomed me'. The service will be held at St John's Roman Catholic Church, South Bar, at 2 p.m. The speaker will be Mrs Vera Hibberd.

CHACOMBE

BIBLE STUDY – At present we are holding this group in the local pub on Tuesday afternoons starting at 2.15. The group is led by Hazel and if you are interested and would like to come along (*contact steward or see paper copy for contact details*).

COFFEE & CHAT – We are now holding these sessions on a Thursday morning instead of Friday from 10.30 am – 12 noon in the schoolroom. Do come along for a chat, a cuppa and a piece of delicious, homemade cake.

CROPREDY

Bible Study every Wednesday pm Speak to Hazel Stagg for details

March 27th Praise evening Speaker Patricia Haley. Come and join us for an hour with Patricia, hymns, readings and a chat with a cuppa and biscuits

GREATWORTH

Friends from around the circuit are invited to join us for a Concert in the Church on the evening of Saturday 23rd March at 7 o'clock performed by the Balfour Ensemble which includes Tony Swift and Rey Lear. The programme will suit all tastes, the acoustics are good, the seats are comfortable (from Warmington Chapel) and the cost is £6.00 which includes refreshments. (*contact steward or see paper copy for contact details*) In aid of Church funds.

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

MARLBOROUGH ROAD THURSDAY CLUB 7.30 pm

7th March – Ten pin bowling

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

NEITHROP CHAPEL FELLOWSHIP MEETINGS START AT 7.30 pm

6th March – Phyllis – Quiz

20th March – Anne Reynolds – Citizens Advice Bureau

27th March – Rob Anning – Easter Service with Communion

UPPER BODDINGTON

At our last Church Council meeting we decided to organise three coffee mornings to raise funds for Katharine House Hospice. The first of these was held in February. The next one will be held on Saturday, March 9th, with the final one planned for April 13th. The events run from 10am to 11:30am. There will be a cake stall and also a Bring & buy stall at each event and as usual there will be the opportunity for a good chat. If you are in the area on either of the planned coffee mornings please come and join us.

On Good Friday, together with our Anglican friends, we will be walking through the village. We hope that other villagers will join us in this walk of Christian witness. The walk will start at the Methodist Church at 2pm, stop for prayers at various points in the village and will end at the Parish Church at 3pm. We would be grateful for any support from friends in the Circuit so, if you have no plans for such an event in your own Church, 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. The money we raise goes to the Methodist Church Fund for World Mission.

March 13th – 1pm Lent Lunch – Proceeds towards a wheelchair for the Red Cross. Any donations towards this would be gratefully received by Jennifer Warren (*contact steward or see paper copy for contact details*)

2.30pm Margaret Clarke – The weather in the Bible, in Priors Hardwick and in between

27th March – Holy week – Rev Mary Pheasey

**DEADLINE FOR THE APRIL EDITION
THURSDAY 14TH MARCH
CONTRIBUTIONS TO
MARY TANNER,**

(contact steward or see paper copy for contact details)