



Bury St Edmunds Methodist Circuit

Newsletter November 2023



Holy Communion Pottery Set made by Revd Rita Carr

Photo used with permission

Pottery, Hospitality and Holy Communion

In 2021 the Methodist Church gifted me a three-month sabbatical. Time to move away from circuit work and take time out to reflect. It was suggested that as part of my sabbatical I tried something new. As I wanted to use my creativity and have long had an interest in pottery, I looked for and found a local pottery school where I began taking lessons. From my very first lesson it was my goal to make a pottery set for us at Holy Communion. As Methodist's I believe that hospitality is fundamental to our DNA and for me that begins at the table of sacrament. So, after having lessons for over two years I felt I was ready to begin the process of making a set for my personal use at Holy Communion. As I held and shaped the clay the words from scripture came to me; *This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ² "Go down to the potter's house, and there I will give you my message." ³ So I went down to the potter's house, and I saw him working at the wheel. ⁴ But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him.*²

⁵ Then the word of the LORD came to me. ⁶ He said, "Can I not do with you, Israel, as this potter does?" declares the LORD. "Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, Israel. (Jeremiah 18: 1-6)

This beautiful piece of pottery didn't go right first time. I too had to reshape and rework it until it took the form I was hoping for. I went to the pottery school with no expectation that firstly I would be any good and secondly that pottery would have anything to do with my life in a theological sense. But I was wrong. Each time I craft anything all that I am and all that I have goes into it and the other members of the class show an interest and ask questions. On seeing the chalice one lady was so moved she actually cried. She said it looked so holy it had moved her to tears and she says she is an unbeliever.

I find now that each piece I make holds a theological significance. Maybe it's because in the two hours of my lesson I am quiet, reflective, prayerful, and so my spirituality is prayed into the pottery. Each piece has had a special meaning for me from the Elephant, Noah's Ark, Bird bath and now this set for Holy Communion.

I give thanks for the gift of my sabbatical where this wonderful work started and for the skill of my tutor for showing me that sometimes we have to reshape our clay when it doesn't go right first time.

May God Bless You, Rev Rita Carr



President and Vice-President update on the situation in the Middle East

As deaths and injuries of civilians continue to rise in the Israel-Hamas conflict, we are heartbroken to see the devastation this is having on so many people living in the region. We believe in a God who weeps, and, alongside the Holy Spirit our Comforter, our hearts are breaking with all those whose loved ones have had their lives brutally cut short, for the terror felt by Israeli families, and the unimaginable wait that many face for news of the people being held hostage. We watch in horror as Gazan civilians flee for their lives, unable to leave Gaza and trapped in the midst of a violent and unpredictable conflict.

The situation may feel overwhelming; so much information, so much misinformation and so much misery. Where is our hope? Watching and reading news reports can leave us confused and feeling helpless. What can we do? As members of the Methodist Church we have witnessed the plight of the Palestinian people's oppression for many years and have sought to encourage those on all sides who are working for lasting peace with justice in the region.

Now we pray for all those people and groups we have met: Daoud Nasser from the Tent of Nations and the recipient of the World Methodist Peace Prize in 2018; Rabbi Nava Hefetz from Rabbis for Human Rights, the Wi'am Peace and Reconciliation Centre in Bethlehem; the staff of the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme for Palestine and Israel, and the countless people and families in Gaza and the West Bank who we, as a Church, have supported over the years. We uphold them, praying for their safety, asking for God's protection and comfort. And we pray for those who have the power to effect change – that they will use this privilege wisely and well to put a

swift end to this violence and aggression. We undertake to continue to pray that the beautiful peace of the Prince of Peace will manifest in our world, and we pledge ourselves once again to respond to the Gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out this discipleship in our worship and mission.

We call on the UK Government to do all it can to encourage dialogue between Israel, the Palestinian Authority, Egypt and states in the wider region. We urge our Government to use its influence to end the siege of Gaza that is depriving its population of water and food, and to call on all parties to abide by international humanitarian law.

As well as praying, we ask you to consider doing the following:

- Supporting [Christian Aid's appeal](#) and/or signing a petition calling on the UK Government to establish safe routes out of Gaza for people left homeless or caught up in the violence
- Find out more about the situation: [Resources for studying theological issues relating to Israel-Palestine](#)
- Write to your MP to ask them to act to protect civilians in Gaza and to support a lasting peace
- Be generous to those who you may not agree with, and try to find common ground. Pray for those people and, if appropriate, pray together. Be aware of those in your church or community who are particularly impacted by this situation, whether they have a connection with Israel or Palestine or because this is a painful and traumatic reminder of their own experiences of conflict. And please pray for those in leadership who are being called to offer support to the people who are impacted by the ongoing situation.

The Revd Gill Newton, President of the Methodist Conference
Deacon Kerry Scarlett, Vice President of the Methodist Conference

NEWS FROM BRADFIELD METHODIST CHURCH

Mr. Francis Carr conducted our Harvest Morning Service, and as we sang “We plough the fields and scatter the good seed on the land”, with the double doors open, it was happening on the other side of the road.! We could hear the clanking of tines being pulled through the soil, ready to prepare the seed bed for next year.

Harvest Festival has always been a special service at Bradfield over the decades. Many of our congregation were involved in farming and continue to be connected with the land around us. Each week as we have come to church we have watched the bare soil sprout tiny green shoots, followed by growing crops, and finally the yellow corn swaying in the wind. When the crops are gathered in then it is a time to celebrate the faithfulness of God by providing another harvest. Again, the cycle begins, but not before we have given thanks.

Familiar harvest hymns were heartily sung at the morning and evening service. Before the evening service refreshments were served and folk had a chance to catch up with visitors from the circuit who came to support us. Through a series of readings from the Psalms Rev Ruth Ridge demonstrated God’s bounty, beauty, and faithfulness. The guest organist Jeremy Harding made sure we went out with a jolly tune to complete the evening. The harvest gifts from the table were taken to Gatehouse charity for their use.

Thank you to everyone who helped make the weekend a success by providing goods, flowers, and refreshments.



NEWS FROM STOWMARKET

Harvest Lunch

In keeping with the sentiment of the Harvest Festival Service, we experimented with a fully vegetarian Harvest Lunch. It was not to everyone's taste, but it was a good conversation starter, especially with regard to where our food comes from. Alongside the normal Jacket Potatoes and salads that we have at this time of year, we served a choice of Mushroom Chili, Leek and Cauliflower Pie or Roasted Vegetable wraps. Diners were given information about their food; where possible the ingredients were local, Fairtrade or using still good food. £110 was raised and after church costs, we were able to send £30 each to All We Can, the Foodbank and Whitechapel Mission.

Creation Vigil

Stella Davis and Liz Kearsley worked together on an event to mark the end of the Season of Creation. This annual celebration is marked by many denominations around the world, beginning on 1st September each year and finishing on the 4th October – the feast day of St Francis of Assisi. Sadly, I was so absorbed in it that I forgot to take any photos! We used the Season of Creation Prayer written by the President and Vice President of Conference – which referenced Land, Water and Air. We had creative and interactive displays on each theme, a book browsing table and a stitched map of the world. The map was attached to a large, low round

trampoline. This demonstrated that the planet supports us, that we have a choice whether to “bounce up and down” or to tread lightly. We also learned that it is impossible not to have some impact on planet earth. For a first attempt at a session like this, it worked well and was attended mostly, although not entirely, by church members. It offered the opportunity for some very good conversations on church and the environment, something that there is not always time to do. Unfortunately, we clashed with a Town Council meeting that night, but several Councilors sent their apologies and hoped that the event would be repeated.



Thanks to Clive Davis who photographed the children enjoying the trampoline after our harvest service.

NEWS FROM IXWORTH – TIGGER GOES TO FOOTWISE!

Tigger has discovered a new facility at Ixworth Methodist Church, so he decided to try it out on the opening day – October 2nd. He met a very nice lady called Auntie Camellia, who gave his paws the once over – he highly recommends the care and attention he received.



Camellia Dighe, a Foot Health Care Practitioner, is available to see to your 'feet needs'

on Mondays at the School Room Clinic in Ixworth Methodist Chapel.: On her list of treatments are Nail Trimming, Thick Nail Reduction, Ingrown Nails, Hard Skin Removal, Cracked Heels, Corn Removal, Diabetic Foot Care.

If you don't already have someone looking after your feet, why not give a go! Camellia can be contacted to book an appointment in the following ways:

Call: 01359 230 428/ 07799664684

or e-mail: FootWise@Protonmail.com

A METHODIST CHURCH CIRCUIT – PROBLEM OR BLESSING?

Thoughts from Josie Keys, member at Trinity Bury St. Edmunds

In October we received the monthly Circuit Newsletter which was filled with interesting and helpful articles. The whole issue made me reflect on our Circuit and the Methodist Circuit system in general and that reminded me of Paul's letter to the Romans chapter 12, verses 4-8 (NRSV) :

“For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.”

I came late to membership of the Methodist Church after my retirement from work but I had had the experience of living out my Christian faith in various denominations since my early teenage years. My retirement move led to a place with no church of a denomination which I had been used to, and that led me to investigate all the congregations in and around the Town and I found myself made very welcome at the nearby Methodist Church: the ambience was welcoming, as were the Minister and congregation.

I knew almost nothing about the workings or theology of Methodism despite having previously gained a lay preaching qualification which allowed me to be nationally accredited as a preacher in URC, Baptist and Methodist Churches.

I was delighted when the local Methodist Church accepted my membership by transfer from a United Free Church (Baptist and URC) and the Circuit Superintendent was given permission to allow me to go “on Plan” without further training. Once that was explained to me, I really needed to find out a bit about Methodism; one of the things I learned was the Circuit System - what a great idea – I envisaged a sharing of resources – a wider meeting of minds – the possibility of a wider mission field. Alas, I was disappointed: in that particular circuit (which I will not name) the co-operation was not good at that time. Each church, I found as I went round preaching, was more congregational than the Congregational Church of my younger days!

What has motivated me to tell you this has been our Circuit’s October Newsletter: what I see there is a group of vibrant congregations – some very small in the number of active people, some struggling with old premises, all with different circumstances to contend with; some with successes in their outreach, but all, it seems to me, doing their best with limited resources to support one another and to witness in the place where they find themselves.

My one disappointment is that circuit services are not better supported but I understand more, as time passes, that there are valid reasons for that; many people, like myself, are older and know the difficulties of travel, of not seeing and hearing so well, of being tired by teatime and not wanting (or being able) to go far in the dark. Younger families need time together in their busy lives. I was pleased when I learned that at the next Circuit Service there was to be included a bring and share meal: by the time you read this that date will be passed and we will know the outcome, but I am sure this idea will be a good one for the future. If lifts can be offered to people finding it otherwise difficult to attend then so much the better. As to the title above, I see The Bury St. Edmunds Methodist Circuit as a blessing to many.

On another personal note, and wearing my “local preacher’s hat”, I would like to thank everyone across this circuit for being welcoming and helpful over the last few years since 2007 that I have shared with you all. We are all in God’s hands and at the same time trying to be those hands for others here on earth by using the various talents and graces we are blessed with. Hence, my reference to the words of Paul with which I began.



METHODIST WOMEN IN BRITIAN

Written by Maureen Hearn – St John's Methodist Church

In October I attended the MWiB district day in Hunstanton. The speaker was Deacon Linda Kinchenton.

Following a difficult childhood and some years of drifting, Linda trained as a teacher and worked at a boarding school for special needs youngsters. A challenging job but one that Linda enjoyed. However, Linda had often heard God's call to be a deacon and could ignore it no longer.

Having gone to training college Linda was ordained as a deacon in 2014. As with presbyters this is an itinerant calling and Linda has been stationed all over the country. At the moment she is in Norfolk but that will change shortly.

The work of a deacon is ministry and community based. Linda can be leading worship, officiating at weddings and other sacraments, and being involved in every aspect of church life but equally she is well known in her locality helping those on the fringes of society, the lost, the lonely and the least. Her ministry takes her to hospitals, schools, youth organisations, the high street and helping with council initiatives.

Linda shines with love and enthusiasm for every aspect of her ministry. Truly an inspiring lady who encouraged us to be deacons in our own life's day to day.

As Hunstanton is quite a drive from Sudbury I was the only person there from the Bury St. Edmunds circuit. In fact, to begin with I was the only person that I knew, but I met some very nice people. **The next district day is on May 16th, 2024, at Diss.**

Tim and I stayed the previous night near Hunstanton which enabled us to visit The East Anglia Methodist Heritage Centre at Wighton which is a fascinating place. I urge everyone who is interested the history of Methodism, Primitive, Wesleyan or United to put the centre on their to do list. It is open on Tuesdays and Fridays from 11:00 - 3:00 , manned by volunteers. I believe it closes at the end of October so put it in next year's calendar.

For those concerned that Tim was simply a chauffeur, don't worry. We fitted in a steam train journey, and he visited the Muckleburgh Collection and the Langham Dome.



**Methodist Women
in Britain**

BecoME (Bury Eco Methodist Event)



A small group met at Bradfield on Saturday 7th October for craft and discussion. We reflected on the changes that we have made during the last year in order to protect the environment, and how easy or difficult those changes were. Government and businesses need to do their bit, but it

is also essential that individuals make changes to their activities too, to protect the planet and all life, for ourselves and others. We looked at Hymn 663 “I the Lord of Sea and Sky”. If you read it with the environment in mind, it speaks of God being Lord of the natural world, and the pain that people are suffering around the world. It goes on to repeatedly ask – Who will do something about it?

A week later I was at a service where we sung the hymn “When I needed a neighbour” (Singing the Faith 256) It’s a hymn we have been singing for many years promising to be with people in their need. That is still true, but it struck me how much the situation has changed. We have discovered that the things we do, the things we eat or buy, the way we travel actually contributes to creating the need of others. Sometimes what they need is not for us to be by their side as neighbours, but to stop doing the things that cause or exacerbate their problems.

At Circuit meeting in October, it was agreed that the focus for circuit environmental efforts should be on Net Zero, which is

a Methodist Church Target for 2030. The feeling of the meeting was that Carbon Footprint calculators, whilst being a useful guide to Carbon impact, were on the whole discouraging. Knowing your carbon footprint does not make any actual difference to Carbon emissions. It is actions that count. Much better that we all concentrate on making the changes we can to our diet, shopping habits, travelling etc. We look after our neighbour when we put their needs before our own.

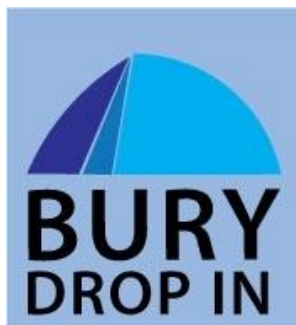
Christmas is fast approaching. We enjoy repeating traditions but it's also a great opportunity to look at what we do and the impact of food, wrapping, decorations and gifts. Can we make some changes that are loving and kind to the planet?



- Home made gifts?
- Wood, metal, glass instead of plastic?
- Fabric for wrapping?
- Gifts of plants or seeds?
- A food change?
- Use your traditional decorations instead of buying new?
- Cut food waste?
- [21 eco-friendly Christmas tips | Friends of the Earth](#)

The Poet Malcolm Guite has just written a piece in the Church Times (20 October), where he quotes Shakespeare Sonnet 65 **“How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea, whose action is no stronger than a flower?”** It is hard to keep goodness alive when things seem very dark. I took these photos in Plovdiv in Bulgaria, earlier in the year. The huge war memorial stands right at the top of a still hill overlooking the city. But look closely, small flowers have made their home in the impossible stonework. God blesses the peacemakers. *Stella Davis*





Bury Drop In is a charity supporting homeless and vulnerably housed people and meet every Tuesday and Friday at Trinity. We have over 100 guests registered, with average attendance now over 40 per session. Volunteers welcoming guests are largely but not exclusively Christians from local churches, and we are supported by staff from NHS Health Outreach, the council Rough Sleeper team, and several other agencies.

Our aim is to help guests progress towards secure housing-somewhere to call “home”-and more stable lifestyles. We provide a wholesome hot meal, cakes and fruit, hot and cold drinks, and most importantly a warm welcome and friendly listening ear. Usually there are only a few sleeping rough in Bury-in doorways, tents, or sheds-and we are able to provide “emergency” support with tents and sleeping bags, toiletries, food and shower vouchers where needed. We ensure they are in contact with the appropriate housing support agencies. The majority of guests are in hostels-living in a simple room. We support some who are now in their own accommodation but need ongoing support to maintain that.

On Sunday 8th October an evening service was held at the Cathedral for Drop In-to celebrate its work, rededicate

volunteers and trustees, and remember those who had died in the previous year. It was a lovely service, led by Dean Joe with support from Rev Robert Green (Chair of Trustees), Rev Jason Vinyard and the Garland Street Baptist Minister Gavin Walter. The service was instituted last year to remember those guests who had died during lockdown when support services were more limited-a significant number of people. This year we remembered and named 4 guests and lit candles in their memory. Two of them were aged under 30, the others only just middle aged. (Life expectancy in the UK for homeless men is 47, women 43). It was a very moving event, which is likely to be repeated annually.

Drop In was established nearly 10 years ago by Bury Christians to meet the needs of homeless in the town and local area, and sadly that need is undiminished. We seek to welcome guests with Christian warmth and love: most have little or no family contact or support, and value the time with us.

Could you support us in some way-by volunteering a day or two a month, donating, or praying for our guests and volunteers? Thank you.

Richard Minns

(Trinity member, Drop In volunteer and trustee)

www.burydropin.org

ADVENT CELEBRATION Advent is a special time for Christians leading up to the great celebration of Christmas, and the coming of Jesus Christ into our world, as Saviour, and as King.

The Churches in Bury St. Edmunds and District are holding a united Advent Celebration on Sunday 10th December. This will be **at the Cathedral** in Bury at 5.15 pm. The service will be one of hymns and songs on the theme of Advent and Christmas, so come and enjoy a good sing.

All are invited to come for refreshments first, from **4.30 pm**.

Our purpose is to celebrate Advent and to look forward to Christmas, together, and to be a united witness to our town and district.

ALL ARE WELCOME to come this event, to meet, to listen and/or to join in.



Northumberland Avenue
Methodist Church
Bury St Edmunds, IP32 6NA

Christmas Fayre

Saturday

2nd DECEMBER

10.30 am - 12.30 pm

**REFRESHMENTS - CAKE STALL
TOMBOLA - GIFT STALLS
& MUCH MORE!**





STOWMARKET METHODIST CHURCH,
REGENT STREET, STOWMARKET.

We are planning to hold a Charity Christmas Coffee Morning on Saturday 9th December at Stowmarket Methodist Church from 10.am until 12 noon. All proceeds will go to Action for Children and the Whitechapel Mission.

There will be cakes, mince pies, tea, coffee and mulled fruit juice as well as a Christmas themed tombola. All are welcome to come along.

If you can why not come wearing
a Christmas jumper.

God Bless, Rev Rita and Francis.





Community Groups

Tea & Tots

Fridays 9.30-11.30am



For tots aged 0-5 with parents or guardians
Free play, messy crafts, snack time, singing and story time.

Open weekly during term time

Thank Goodness It's Friday

Fridays 3.30pm-5pm

For ages 6+ with parents or guardians.
Themed crafts and games, table sports, refreshments.

Open weekly during term time



Coffee and Chat

Saturdays 10.30am-12.30pm

Coffee, cake, board games, puzzles, knit and natter.
Monthly hobbies group (second Saturday).
Monthly film screening (fourth Saturday).



St John's Methodist Church, York Road

For more information please contact our Community Worker Elizabeth at
elizabeth.lee1400@outlook.com



THANK GOODNESS IT'S FRIDAY

FRIDAYS (TERM-TIME ONLY) 3.30PM - 5PM

AROUND THE WORLD IN 90 DAYS



For ages 6+ with parents or guardians

Join us as we travel around the world, exploring wildlife, habitats and cultures. Each week we'll visit a new country, make crafts and foods, play games and discover more about the wonderful world we share.

Starting 15th September.



St John's Methodist Church,
York Road
elizabeth.lee1400@outlook.com

OLD NEWTON METHODIST CHURCH

Wednesday Lunch



Wednesday, 1st November

12.15 – 1.30

*Do come and join us for a good lunch
in friendly company. We'd love
to have you with us.*

*Please note that our Christmas Lunch
will be on Tuesday, 5th December.*

OLD NEWTON METHODIST CHURCH

MONDAY MEET UP

Monday, 13th November



We're open 11-3

This is the first of a series of sessions to follow on from last winter's Winter Warmers.

It is a group to meet up with old and new friends to enjoy each other's company and share a simple meal together.

It is a drop in session so come when you can and stay as long as you like.

Let Joy Wood (01449673433) know if you would like a lift.

OLD NEWTON METHODIST CHURCH

COFFEE MORNING

in aid of



Tuesday 21st November

10.45 – 12.00

Do join us for coffee, nibbles and
lively chat – a great opportunity
for meeting up with old friends,
making new ones
and supporting this Charity.

Raffle

IXWORTH
METHODIST CHAPEL
COFFEE MORNING
Tuesdays

from 10 to 11.30am

**Come and have a cup of
coffee / tea and enjoy a good
chat at the same time!**



You are warmly invited to.....

C.A.M.E.O

(Come And Meet Each Other)

When?

The first Wednesday of each month

2.30pm

Where?

**The Methodist Church
Northumberland Avenue
IP32 6NA**

Fairtrade Tea and coffee



**Please do call in to see our books,
DVD's and CD's for sale!**

All are welcome!

~ Free parking ~ Fully Accessible Building ~

Café at Trinity Methodist Church



Wednesday 9 30 – 12 noon



ALL ARE
WELCOME
HERE



Home made cake & scones
Fairtrade tea & coffee



Bric a brac & books



GUARDIANS & TIDDLERS

Baby & Toddler Group
Newborn - Preschool

£1
PER
FAMILY

THURSDAYS
1PM - 3PM
(TERM TIME ONLY)



The Methodist Church
Northumberland Avenue
Bury St Edmunds
IP32 6NA



Thank you to everyone who has submitted articles, sent in their news or told us about their events. We really would like this to be a newsletter written and enjoyed by all across the circuit, we'd love you to share your news, prayers, events, tips for life, vegetable gardens or even a joke with us.

We welcome your feedback on the content, format and distribution of the newsletter. Please let us know your thoughts.



Anyone wishing to submit articles for the December Newsletter please send through to the circuit office circuit.admin@hotmail.com by 16th November, we look forward to hearing your news. If you no longer wish to receive the newsletter or information from Bury St Edmunds Methodist Circuit please ring 01284 731082 or email circuit.admin@hotmail.com

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