



News & Information



February 2007

One other financial result that I was not advised about in time for inclusion last month. North Warnborough raised £188.00 through their Christmas Collections which has been shared between Naomi House and our Circuit Project.

The Methodist Church in Britain has embarked on a leadership review that 'will affect the church and its mission for years, if not decades, to come.' Between now and July church strategists are planning the future shape of the church's central Connexional Team or national leadership. Church members and leaders will be kept abreast of the 'Team Focus' proposals through a series of meetings within the church's 32 districts and through regional meetings. The project is designed to meet the church's agreed 'Priorities' more effectively and at a 30% lower cost.

I am able to inform you that as from September Mr. & Mrs. Hodgson will be living at Preston Park, Faversham, Kent. Going home almost! It is the St. Augustine's Circuit which serves Canterbury and Faversham. I shall be responsible for the Faversham town centre church, which is united Methodist/URC and 4 village churches, one of which is a joint Methodist/Anglican church (though I am led to believe that it may be possible to negotiate on the number of village churches). Sounds like they want to keep me out of mischief!!!

Love to all. God bless. Debbie

And Alison Parker has also been told officially that she will be stationed in this Circuit!

Play and Pray Through Lent - A family resource: stories and activities to use with children at home, is a new book edited by Kay Warrington, and published by the Bible Reading Fellowship priced at £9.99. Play is nature's way of extending a child's horizons and understanding of life. 'Play and Pray through Lent' draws on this natural sense of playfulness and creativity to enable children to grow spiritually by linking the world of the child with the great Lenten themes of the Church. Based on the Revised Common Lectionary, the book suggests ways in which children can engage with the story of Easter during the six weeks of Lent in a creative way. This is achieved using very simple visual items, such as a story cloth and card figures, to give an ongoing focus. The project covers all three years of the Revised Common Lectionary and may be started in any year (A, B or C). The material also includes a simple song for each week of Lent and for Easter Day itself, especially written for the project. Each song is sung to a well-known nursery rhyme tune.

And another new publication is, Turning Points - the CAFOD/Christian Aid Lent Book 2007 written by various authors and published by Darton Longman and Todd at £4.95. For the first followers of Jesus Lent was the time when candidates for baptism prepared themselves to change their lives forever. And for Christians today it is also a special time of expectancy, reflection and making choices. We ask ourselves, Who do we want to be? What values are we to live by? What do we hope for? Who we are to follow? Six leading writers offer their own personal response to the readings for each day of Lent 2007, using stories and insights to help us drawing closer to God through reflection on the words of scripture, through prayer, and through action for justice. The contributors are Barbara Glasson, Pamela Hussey, Joyce Karuri, Moire O'Sullivan, Kathleen Richardson and Jane Williams.

For 36 weeks from Sunday 4th. February, the local Salvation Army will be using Sarum Hall at Trinity for their Morning service (at 10am). This is while their present building in Wessex Close is demolished and new, larger premises erected in its place. A trial has already taken place to establish if the sound of the band can be heard in the church at Trinity and as it cannot, there will be no problem with the times of the two services overlapping within the same suite of premises.

Do you remember that last year our Missions Committee suggested that people may like to host a Lent Lunch by inviting some friends and neighbours for a simple meal of soup, bread and cheese and then charge a minimum of £2.50 for Mission Funds? Eileen Hirons at North Warnborough took up the challenge and it was so successful that she is doing it again this year. Support from friends across the Circuit was very good and Eileen is hoping for a similar response again. The dates are Wednesday 28th. February and Tuesday 13th. March, 12.30pm at Eileen's home, North Warnborough. This year our Circuit Project will be the beneficiary. You do need to reserve a place as space is limited. You can either phone Eileen or Pam Lancaster. And if you did not go last year then why not go this? I can vouch for the fact that you will get a good lunch. I shall certainly be booking again!

Your help is needed. Consistently "lack of transport" is cited as a major issue for young people. Community Action Hampshire is currently running a project to examine the barriers to services for children and young people caused by lack of transport. A consultant has been appointed and he would like to talk to groups of young people about this issue. The County Council are involved in the project. Can you help? Can he come to one of your regular meetings and run a focus group? Please contact Jo Dixon at Community Action Hampshire 01962 857354. It a great chance to get something moving on this difficult issue. Nicola Briggs (our District Youth Officer) would be interested to hear if any of you make contact and receive a visit and any feedback you may have. You can contact Nicola on nicola@briggs.gotadsl.co.uk

What role does the Church have in bringing multicultural Britain together? How can the Church help ethnic minority Christians express their faith and culture fully and contribute to the wider society? In a multicultural country, how can diversity be fully embraced and expressed in the life of the Church? These, and other questions, will be discussed at a conference highlighting the experiences and challenges of Methodists from all over the world who live and worship in the UK. "Ethnicity, Cohesion and the Church" aims to give Methodists from across the country the chance to share stories of what is already happening throughout the Church and envision new possibilities for working with and supporting nationality-based and language-based groups in their faith and worship. Delegates will be able to hear from those working with asylum-seekers in Walsall, a Zimbabwean Methodist fellowship and a Farsi-speaking congregation in Doncaster, to name just a few. They will also be able to find out more about the mission work of the Church and what resources are available to help them to engage with mission in their own communities. The conference will welcome a variety of speakers, such as the Revd Emmanuel Aggrey-Ogoe, Chaplain to the Ghanaian Fellowship in London, and the President and Vice President of the Methodist Conference, Revd Graham Carter and Mr Dudley Coates. The Revd David Deeks, General Secretary of the Methodist Church, will also be attending. Ermal Kirby, Chair of the London Methodist District, which includes a variety of multicultural groups such as Zimbabwean, Ghanaian and Chinese congregations, says; "There's so much exciting work going on around the Church, but we don't always hear about it. This weekend gives us an excellent opportunity to hear these stories and to think together how we can make the most of the wonderfully diverse gifts and different ways of being the church. We hope that we will be challenged, encouraged and uplifted by the experiences we share as a church." Delegates will have the opportunity to attend a variety of workshops, including "The Challenge of New Churches", "Urban Mission" and "Mission Education Resources". There will also be plenty of opportunity for worship, with morning prayer led by groups from Korea, Tonga, Ghana and Shona Methodist fellowships. The Methodist Church may have started in Britain, but now Methodist and United Churches are found throughout the world, each with a rich heritage and spirituality of its own. It's always a joy when Christians from other countries, including those in the Methodist family, come to live in Britain. This conference is all about finding out what we can learn from others, how we can support one another in our faith journeys, and how we can all grow together as the Body of Christ. The venue is the Hayes Conference Centre at Swanwick and the dates are 2nd. - 4th. February.

► We shall be changing the sequence of dates for our Circuit Plan from this coming September. Instead of starting in January, April, July and October they will be starting a month earlier. One of the benefits is that arrangements for Christmas will not need to be made so early. As a result the Plan for the third quarter will only run for some eight weeks in July and August. I am looking at making some further changes to the Plan format. A new Plan Block has been introduced on the current plan and the next item to be tackled is the list of names.

► Do you work with 9-13s? If so, tell them about mctxt4u. This is the Methodist Children's new free weekly text service aimed at the 9-13s and is a way to build community. Our new texting "comUniT" is growing with young people texting to join each day. Also they can communicate on 'Da Blab bulletin board' on www.methodistchildren.org.uk Mctxt4u is now live - text 'Join' to 07786205203. Promotional material is available from Methodist Children in the form of credit card sized flyers, quoting the text2 details and how to join. If you would like some of these cards, they are available in bundles of 10 from MPH, absolutely free! Call 01733 325002 to order yours. The messages will be posted on the website for leader's information!
<http://www.methodistchildren.org.uk/> Da Blab bulletin board:
fullerp@methodistchurch.org.uk

► Street Children Aid Pro Deo now has a website where you can catch up with news of their work and all the latest projects. The address is <http://www.streetchildrenaid.org/>

► Our Methodist Youth President Rob Redpath is very keen to make contact with young people throughout the Connexion and would very much like to come and visit any church and circuit. If you would like to contact Rob, please email youthpresident@mayc.info

► International Mission Teams are being established by the European Methodist Youth Council to run from September 2007 until the summer of 2008. They will be hosted by projects in Grimsby, England and Chemnitz, Germany. Each team will consist of three or four members. They offer the opportunity for young people aged 18 -26 years to volunteer for a year to work in one of them and to engage in mission in a practical way – for example working with young people in a variety of settings, in a hospital with all ages, in community centres and schools. Volunteers are provided with accommodation, food, spending money, good management & effective support and above all the opportunity to be challenged in their faith and in putting it into practice. Want to know more? Look at the short presentations from the hosting projects and other information on the web site www.emyc.net. Applications have to be made no later than March 31st. For more information contact: secretary@emyc.net

► Almost 82,000 people visited the rejesus.co.uk website during December, with 2,412 of those going online to search for Jesus on Christmas Day. As well as being able to explore Christmas, post a prayer, sing karaoke carols and look at the Nativity story, surfers were able to indicate how they were feeling. The most popular response was "seeking God" and many other people indicated that they were feeling "sad" or "tired". After Christmas, during the first three days of January, almost 10,000 people visited the site and by then the most popular response to the question of how surfers were feeling was "tired", followed by "seeking God". With so many people turning to the web in their search for Jesus, what do we need to learn? Many people are hungry for truth. Are we helping them find it?

► The report detailing recommendations for reviewing the way Youth Conference works, as well as how we as a Church ensure we are encouraging young people's participation in all levels of our Church, has been accepted by Youth Conference and will now go onto Methodist Conference for discussion and approval in 2007. This has been a huge piece of work, and many people have had an input into the process. Copies of the report are available by email. Visit <http://www.mye.org.uk/>

► 'Deeper' will be the next stage of a new innovative Christian youth work training resource from SPECTRUM created particularly for part-timers and volunteers. We need your wisdom and experience to shape the curriculum and vision of Deeper. There is a focus group being held in London on Wednesday May 23rd. to which current tutors, potential tutors and youth workers or managers who oversee learners are invited. Each day will run from 11am to 4pm with lunch provided. For more information about the day, contact Mary McGinty at the Spectrum office mary.mcginty@ctbi.org.uk. Anyone interested is invited to join us whether they have tutored Spectrum previously or not. Booking is essential and must be made via the Spectrum office. The first 10 bookings (and attendance!) by new tutors/youth workers at each focus group will receive a voucher enabling a volunteer from their church to undertake one of the new Spectrum modules at no cost (worth £30). For more information about 'Deeper', please contact 'Deeper' writer and consultant Jane Chevous: jane@reshapers.org 0845 3251312.

► The United Church in Winchester has for two years been supporting an Aids orphan project in the Pinetown Township outside Durban, Natal, South Africa. They will be hosting the co-ordinator of the project, Glenda Howieson on Thursday 26th. April. South Africa is a great place for a holiday, to see a giraffe, play golf or have a good time at the beach, but the tourist brochures don't say very much about the poverty in the townships that is never far away. Phakamisa exists "to uplift" (literally, from its Zulu meaning) people in the impoverished communities 30 miles north, west and south of Durban in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. It provides "hope for the hopeless" – love, care, some of the basics such as food and clothing and educational programmes, vegetable gardens and much more. Glenda Howieson started Phakamisa 12 years ago and will be visiting the UK in April and May to promote the work and raise funds. Glenda is based at Pinetown Methodist Church just outside Durban.

South Africa has the highest incidence of HIV/AIDS in the world and the problem is worst in KwaZulu-Natal – 1 in 2 who Phakamisa works with is HIV positive (the figure is 1 in 500 in the UK) and there are about 70 people dying from AIDS each week in the areas where Phakamisa has influence. In 2006, Phakamisa's small core staff trained 290 Educare teachers who taught 10,000 under-6s; there are approx 1,500 care-giver groups helping 5,000 under-20s who are orphaned or abandoned; 80 vegetable gardens feed more than 850 families; the programme impacts 15,000 children, plus adults.

Glenda Howieson has the powerful stories behind all these statistics and a need for spiritual, emotional and financial support from the UK. Steve Lawson from United Church (joint Methodist-United Reformed) Winchester visited the programme in 2006: "Working in the townships is tough, emotionally-draining and potentially-dangerous – that people in the UK "share the journey" is important. This work is a symbol of hope and a "sign of the Kingdom of God in a broken world". It is a startlingly obvious opportunity to make a difference and members of a small group of British churches are making a real contribution."

Sunday February 4th.	Local Preachers Recognition Service for Joan Coomber	Oakridge 6pm.
Saturday February 10th.	Skittles Evening in aid of our Circuit Project. Advance booking essential please for catering purposes.	Trinity Hall. 7pm. Tickets (including supper) £5, children £4. Contact Heather Shepherd 327105
Saturday February 17th.	Fun House	St. Andrews 10.30am -12.30pm
Saturday February 24th.	Emerging Church – The Journey (2) See poster in churches for details etc	Chandlers Ford.
Monday February 26th.	Worship Leader Training	Trinity Prayer Chapel 7.45-9.30pm
Wed'day February 28th.	Circuit Preachers Meeting	7.45pm. Trinity
Sunday March 4th.	'Hearing God's call'. An exploration afternoon with workshops.	St. Andrew's. 4pm-5.30pm followed by a bring and share tea.
Sunday March 4th.	Circuit Celebration 'Hearing God's call'	St. Andrew's. 6.30pm. Including Holy Communion.