



NEWS & INFORMATION

January 2008

- The Carol Service listed on the Circuit Plan at Immanuel with St. Mark on Christmas Eve at 6.30pm has been cancelled.

- This year the United Service during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will be held on Sunday January. 20th. The AGM will be held in the Wessex Christian Fellowship Church (Cranbourne Lane) and will start at 4.30pm with Tea at 5.45pm. The United Service will be held in the new Salvation Army Hall (just across the road in Wessex Close) at 6.30pm. Car parking is limited immediately outside the Salvation Army Hall, although I believe that we may be able to use the Wessex Fellowship Church car park which is only a short distance from us.
Ron Smith

- On the Circuit Plan, a Network quiz evening is detailed for Friday 15th. February. It has now become necessary to move this a week EARLIER to Friday 8th. February. All other details are the same. Can you note this change of date please.

- I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the Grants Officer for Adult Services, Hampshire County Council, having only recently taken on this responsibility. Can your organisation make a big difference with a small grant? Do you have an idea for a project that can have a positive change in the bodies and minds of some of Hampshire's older people, or those caring for them? Following the success of the first Older People's Wellbeing grants round, Hampshire County Council have dedicated an increased pot of around £20,000 to run this scheme for 2007/08. This programme will be run with the aim to fund projects which promote older people's wellbeing and self-confidence, and to increase the County Council's knowledge base by sharing information with Voluntary and Community Organisations about what really works. Projects previously funded have included the creation and publication of a book archiving early life experiences, the running of a pilot Salsa dance class, an education and events project focusing on healthy eating and a befriending scheme to name just a few. For more information, search for the Older People's Wellbeing Grant section following this link www3.hants.gov.uk/grants. Alternatively contact me, Siobhán Osborne, Grants Officer-Adult Services, on 01962 847116, or by e-mail at siobhan.osborne@hants.gov.uk. The closing date for applications is 31st. January 2008.

- A reminder that the various Connexional Fund grants as agreed by each Church Council should be forwarded to Alan Pearce as soon as possible please. Likewise, Church Treasurers are reminded to ensure that their signed (by the Independent Examiner) and approved Church Accounts are sent to Anne Shepherd as quickly as possible. Further, completed Schedule A and Schedule A Supplements need to go to Les Bone before the Circuit Property Meeting on 30th. January.

- Keepin' It Real is a new resource for those who work with 9-13s which addresses topics that affect young people and offers fun and practical ways of dealing with some difficult issues that they may face - communication, reputation, conflict and negotiation. Produced by the Methodist Church and the ecumenical children's charity, CURBS, Keepin' It Real is published at a time when the Government is asking schools to help young people deal with anxiety, anger and conflict as well as teaching good manners and behaviour. Penny Fuller from MethodistChildren says "there are lots of resources to help young people deal with topics like sexuality and drugs, but not to help with less tangible things like reputation or 'Street-Cred'. Keepin' It Real addresses those issues". It is available from MPH for £6.99 plus p&p

- During Lent there will be opportunities to meet in ecumenical groups in various parts of the Circuit and there will be a weekly communion service at Trinity on a Wednesday morning. We are also offering an exciting new opportunity to make a personal journey through Lent.

You are invited to join a guided journey into prayer during Lent using a book called "How to Pray" by John Pritchard, Bishop of Jarrow. In "How to Pray", John Pritchard begins by showing us how to slow down enough in everyday life to be aware of God. He then introduces us to a wide range of ways into prayer. The book is divided up in such a way that it is easy to read a small part each day (apart from Sundays) during Lent and there will be a leaflet with a suggested reading pattern. It is a very practical and encouraging book with some real gems of prayers and quotations.

The invitation is to make our own individual journey into prayer in our own time and space. However there will be opportunities to reflect on the experience in small groups across the Circuit during Lent, if you wish. Evening opportunities are planned at Oakley, Kempshott and Oakridge and a daytime opportunity at St Andrews. At Trinity there will be an opportunity to reflect as one of the choices on two Sunday mornings. You are welcome to join in any of these occasions but it is quite possible to make the journey without attending a group or to drop in on a group on one occasion. A leaflet with details of the suggested reading pattern and opportunities to meet, together with copies of the book, will be available in January.

The journey will begin with worship on Ash Wednesday 6th February at Kempshott at 7.30pm when we will introduce the book. There will also be an opportunity to buy or borrow the book after the worship then. It pauses with a Circuit Service on Palm Sunday, 16th March at 6.30pm at Trinity. We hope we will then each be able to continue our own journey into prayer in whatever way seems helpful to us.

It would be really helpful to have some idea in advance of how many people would like to take part in this guided journey so we know how many books to order. If you are interested in taking part and would like to buy or borrow a book, please would you let Jacqui, Angela, Margaret or Alison know or sign the list available locally.

Books will be available to collect on Ash Wednesday at Kempshott. If you have not already acquired a book and are not able to be there, please let Angela Webb or Jacqui Horton know so that we can make alternative arrangements.

Angela Webb

- A Word in Time, the online Bible study for daily life, was launched at the beginning of September and has been hugely successful, with around 300 visitors to the site every day. But now the team have decided to make the studies even more accessible. An audio file of each day's Bible study and a bigger file with all of the studies for each week can easily be downloaded onto a computer or mp3 player, so that users can listen at a time convenient to them.

Alison Pollard, Web Writer and Researcher and the new voice of A Word in Time comments; 'People find it increasingly difficult to make time to read and reflect on the Bible in today's busy world. A Word in Time made it easier by giving people access to a Bible study on the internet. Now we've taken it to the next level and you can catch up with your daily Bible study at a time most convenient to you - whether you're cooking dinner, doing your weekly shop or on the daily commute to work.'

A Word in Time features a daily Bible reading, background and an explanation of the text, reflections and questions to ponder from that week's contributor. It follows the readings in the Methodist Prayer Handbook bringing the 40,000 readers of the handbook together with online disciples in their search for daily spirituality.

Each audio file is available in two formats - a high quality version for those using broadband internet connections and a lower-quality file for those using a dial-up connection. The audio files for past Bible studies are available online in the Word in Time archives.

The audio Bible studies are also ideal for sharing with those who otherwise might not have access to daily Bible notes, perhaps because of a disability or simply not having access to the internet.

- The Methodist Church has made giving to its funds easier than ever by setting up an Internet facility for donations and fundraising. The website is reliable, secure and easy to use, and by using GiftAid, UK taxpayers can increase the value of their donation by 28% at no extra cost to them. Supporters are able to donate to four of the Methodist Church's funds using this method; JMA, the Methodist Church Fund, the Methodist Church Fund for World Mission and the Methodist Church Fund for Home Mission.

John Nutt, Mission Education Co-ordinator, says; "Giving to Methodist Church funds has never been so easy. Not many people carry a chequebook around with them these days and people are increasingly choosing to shop and donate to their favourite causes online. We are truly grateful for every donation we receive, however it is given, no matter how big or small. And, of course, we still very much welcome donations by traditional methods."

As well as being convenient for individual supporters, the facility is also ideal for churches and groups organising fundraising activities - they can simply create their own JustGiving webpage with a link to the fund they want to raise money for. More information on how to do this is available on the website or from Mission Education. The new system has already been used in the Church's emergency appeal following severe flooding in South Mexico. It is also possible to use the secure giving system to make regular donations to the funds or to offer a gift in memory of someone who has passed away. The more technical-minded can even download 'widgets' from JustGiving to place a donation link on their own website or network page.

- Congratulations to Anya Woodbridge who has passed her Level 2 Signing examination. And a reminder, especially to preachers, that services on the third Sunday morning at Trinity are always signed for the benefit of those who are deaf or hard of hearing.

- The Methodist Church Music Society has encouraged and developed the use of all forms of music in worship throughout the Methodist Church for some considerable time but the future of the society depends on its ability to change in order to reflect what is happening to church music within Methodism. So, although the MCMS has served the needs of organists and choirs for many years and, I'm sure, will continue to do so, that same excellent standard of service needs to be offered to all of our music groups and bands. "I have been a performing musician for over 30 years in a huge variety of situations and venues and for many different reasons. In 1991 I became founder and leader of a worship band in Loughborough and have led worship and entertained with Christian music in hundreds of Churches and Chapels in the UK. I have also played for Christian and secular events and festivals including Methodist conference morning worship and the MCMS conference. One of my primary activities with the band has been the introduction of contemporary worship styles and music to more traditional congregations and to demonstrate we can move forward while keeping the best of our wonderful musical heritage". So writes Rob Newton who has recently been appointed as an executive member with responsibility for worship bands and music groups. You can visit his website at www.dpmrob.co.uk

On December 18th. Kempshott Methodist Church will be 95 years old and the Revd. Charles Wesley will be 300 years old!!

To celebrate these occasions we are holding a short service of thanksgiving at 8.00pm which will include two or three of Mr. Wesley's hymns.

The service will be followed by seasonal refreshments.

Do come and say thanks to God and Charles!

	Other January dates not mentioned elsewhere	
Wednesday 23rd. January	Mid-week Communion service	Trinity Prayer Chapel. 10.30am
Wednesday 30th. January	Circuit Property Committee	Trinity Lounge. 7.45pm.

- Our recent Circuit Meeting asked if local churches could assist our webmaster by making updates to the Circuit website as necessary for their churches by asking someone to undertake this. It was also asked what would you find helpful to have included on the website and are there currently items that should be modified or removed? Any comments should be made to Les Bone please. Churches were asked to take to their Stewards Meeting and/or Church Council and ask the questions posed above.

- The Circuit Meeting also voted to make a further application for a Lay Dispensation to preside at Holy Communion with effect from September 2008. However, as this application will need to be made before the next Circuit Meeting (due to District deadlines) and must be for a named person (a Local Preacher), churches will be advised separately of the person nominated. There is of course no guarantee that a further dispensation will be granted.

- Ian Harrison has recently circulated a paper with reference to THE SAMUEL FUND. As this is being made available locally I don't intend to repeat all its contents here but simply to underline that this has come about through a contact that Ian has made in Zambia as a result of one of his letters to the Methodist Recorder! The aim of the fund is to provide financial or "in kind" assistance to individuals or families "in need" in Zambia (as typified by Mr Samuel Bwalya and his family) and to provide financial or "in kind" assistance to educational establishments in Zambia (as typified by The Margaret Bell School, Kitwe). It will provide mainly short term assistance to alleviate specific needs. It is not the aim to provide capital sums for major projects. The fund will be held here in the UK under the auspices of Kempshott Methodist Church, separate from the normal church accounts and will seek to raise funds from Methodist and other churches in the Basingstoke area, and from the Methodist Connexion at large, on a rolling basis. It will also accept donations from individuals or corporate organisations. It will remain under the aegis of the Kempshott Methodist Church Council and be managed on a day-to-day basis by persons nominated by them and will be dispensed to provide assistance as identified in Zambia by a panel of people nominated by the United Church of Zambia and The Margaret Bell School together with any other independent experts they believe would be helpful. Donations that are made for a specific purpose (e.g. for the Margaret Bell School) will be earmarked and spent according to the wishes of the donor. Non-specific donations will be spent according to the needs as identified by the panel in Zambia and approved by the Fund managers.

So, supported by the Circuit Meeting, it is now over to you to help in whatever ways you can.

- At St. Andrew's, the Church Council has agreed in principle to the redevelopment of their site including the demolition of the present buildings. There is a small group appointed who are working on the scheme, made up with people from St. Andrew's and the wider Circuit. There are two options under consideration at the present but more may emerge, both of which involve demolishing the existing church buildings and a new multi-purpose church/community hall being erected in exchange for some of our land. The St. Andrews Church Council has expressed a preference for one of these schemes and this has been endorsed by our Circuit Meeting. If you want to know more please speak to Maurice Scorey, Bill Jeram, Les Bone, Terry Ayres, Ian Harrison or Margaret Locke-Wheaton.

Material for the February sheet to reach me as soon as possible please, but by Friday 11th. January at the latest.

Richard Godfrey office@basingstokecircuit.net