

BASINGSTOKE AND READING CIRCUIT

UPDATE 4

Launch and celebration of new circuit

Sunday, 31 Aug 2014

Venue: Sherfield School, on the Reading to Basingstoke road.
Lots more details later! Please put in your diaries.
We hope hundreds will come!

DEACON MARIA HOWARD - BASINGSTOKE AND READING'S NEW DEACON



On Saturday 25th January Linda and I set off for Tilehurst. This was a whole new experience for me, having never been to that part of Reading before and I have to admit to feeling

slightly anxious. However, I needn't have worried as the directions I had been sent were excellent and the journey only took about 40 minutes - not very far at all really! So why Tilehurst? What was the reason for our visit?

We had been invited to meet Maria, our new Deacon, and what a privilege that was. We chatted to Maria for a short time over lunch, but in that short time we seemed to get to know her really well as she shared so much about her training, her family and her past experiences. Maria will come as a probationer Deacon, having spent the last two years training at Wesley House Methodist Theological College in Cambridge. She will be based in the West Reading section of the Circuit, working in the ministry team which serves Emmanuel, Tilehurst, Bradfield and Burnt Hill churches.

In the last Update David spoke of the Basingstoke Presbyterian's visit as his 'day of double discovery' and so it was for us - the people at Tilehurst made us so welcome. It was really exciting to hear what is happening in their church and to share with them some of the things that are happening in Basingstoke. As we drove back to Basingstoke we felt animated and excited, having had such a wonderful time and we were very aware that we have been truly blessed with a lovely Presbyterian for Basingstoke and a lovely Deacon for Reading.

Marianne Sales, Basingstoke Circuit Steward

THE FLOODS IN BASINGSTOKE - FOODBANK NEEDED

Dear Supporter,

I have just had the following message: "We've been contacted by Sovereign Housing regarding emergency food support this week for victims of flood damage in Buckskin." It is great that agencies around the town know that we can help, and feel they can rely on us in times of need. Our volunteers do such an excellent job where sensitivity is so important.

Exploring the vision of the new circuit

As part of developing the vision of the new circuit the group concerned worked with some images of trees. These have a trunk which reflects the Trinity and is in the shape of the cross. They are rooted in biblical soil. In particular the verses from Hebrews 10:23 - 25. The canopy or foliage take on different forms at different times but contain ideas that we felt contributed to the circuit vision. Some individuals have already taken this image forward in prayerful devotions and others have correctly questioned the contents of the canopy. As part of the preparation for our coming together as a new circuit Alison Parker (minister in Basingstoke) is more than happy to meet with groups (either existing or specially convened) to explore our new vision using these trees or others that may be generated for individual churches. We could also reflect on the words that have already been published.

Alison is contactable on 01256 465064 or alison.m.parker@googlemail.com.

Woodley Poverty Forum – Flying the Flag for Poverty

What would be the outreach programme with most topical relevance to your community? At Christ Church Woodley we discovered the inspirational report – '**The lies we tell ourselves; ending comfortable myths about poverty**' – knew we had a starting point which was controversial, political, and highly relevant to our mission.

Three public meetings took place from September to November, which focused on –

- Facts and assumptions within our attitudes, our media, and our politics
- The voice of poverty – and the particular pain within our affluent community
- The challenge for the future – discussed by panel of politicians, national Christian charities, and practitioners.

At the meetings were friends from six or seven local churches, the public and the invited panel. These are the kind of ideas from the last meeting with the most enthusiasm for action –

- Lobby for change over the injustices facing the poor
- Join programmes that provide debt counseling
- Seek information about services that support the poor – personal and practically
- Reorganise our finances in ways that support the Credit Union
- Support Foodbanks and a new cookery programmes.

You can find out more by looking up Christian Aid, Christians Against Poverty, Church Action on Poverty, Reading Credit Union, Woodley Pilot Light Trust, the Samaritans in Reading, and the Citizens Advice Bureaux.

You may have worship strategies but should you have poverty strategies?

Kempshott Methodist Church

Kempshott Methodist Church is very much a church family. A regular and responsive congregation of between fifteen and twenty shares mutual pastoral care in times of both joy and sorrow. Activities outside morning worship include a Ladies' Group which meets on a monthly basis in members' homes and a monthly meeting for prayer and fellowship. A Bible study group attended by Kempshott members and some from the nearby St Andrew's is another monthly occurrence. Outreach represented by a group called KOMBAT (Kempshott Old Men Behaving Absolutely Terribly) involves men who are not church members in a range of activities including bowling, snooker, visits to the races and local pubs and usually involves a meal of some sort. This group contributed to a "Rocky Gospel" which was used by house groups across the circuit. An annual highlight is a weekend away at Sidholme, where relaxed fellowship encourages spiritual growth. For the last three years a regular luncheon event termed "First Sunday" has taken place in the home of one couple. Aimed at providing company for those who live alone, this has also raised in excess of £5,000 for various charities and extended the culinary skills of the hostess. Members of this church have supported the new development of St Andrew's Church. Within the last two years ecumenical links with the parish church of St Mark's have been extended and joint services between the two are becoming more common.

Commitment to others in a wider context is recognised by major practical and financial contributions to projects supporting the homeless such as May Place House and the Camrose Centre. On an international level as a result of contact established through The Methodist Recorder, a fund called "The Samuel Fund" now supports prisoners preparing for release, the Margaret Bell School and the education of the prisoner's son.

ENGLISH CONVERSATION

Put together one Spanish student, 4 Nepalese mums, 2 Roman Catholics, a St Peter's member, and me, a Methodist – and what do you get? Well – English Conversation classes, of course!

This is another St Andrew's, Basingstoke project, held in the 'Mug & Biscuit'. The ecumenical group leading this initiative is offering English conversation for an hour to any local people for whom English is an additional language. By and large, the students select the focus for the week, and at our most recent meeting, we concentrated on vocabulary & colloquialisms, as well as trying to tackle developing assertiveness on the phone in our all-female group.

It is good to see the members of the group speaking more freely and with greater confidence. We've just agreed that we'll carry on at least until the start of the summer holidays.

**PILGRIMAGE DATES:
SAT 16 AUG – SUN 24 AUGUST**

Please send your news for the next UPDATE as soon as possible
Contact: Terry Ayres 01256 328203 or hatfield.fcj@virgin.net;
Gill Lawson gill@lawson-net.co.uk or TEXT her on 07990 815282.
Marianne Sales mariannebunn1610@hotmail.com

My Kenya experience

On the first day we had our first real Kenyan experience where our mini bus broke down on the way to have lunch at the Lake Naivasha Country Club. The weather was soaring hot in the mini bus – both Rev. Andy Moffoot and Bob Mackintosh helped kind passers-by who came out from their cars to push the mini bus off the main road to free traffic. A replacement bus came. Eventually we arrived at our destination some 3 hours later with no lunch prepared for us. Andy, our excellent group leader sorted the problem and even Kenyan beer, Tusker, for some of the group. Next a boat trip which we thoroughly enjoyed seeing hippopotamuses and various birds. We had many more experiences such as worshipping at Ngong Methodist church where we worshipped over 3 hours without complaint! During the service a live chicken and bananas were auctioned to raise money to continue a church project.

People were warm, friendly, welcoming and very hospitable. No matter where we went we were given food. Before each meal, someone poured warm water from a jug to wash our hands individually and gave us tissue paper to wipe our hands afterwards. This was a humbling experience to share.

The ex-Bishops, current Bishops and the Presiding Bishop all came across very down to earth, approachable and very passionate in their work. It became apparent to me that on the whole they embark on projects in stages without securing all the necessary money before completing their project/s.

A wonderful experience – and I take this opportunity publically to say a big thank you to Andy for his tireless efforts in organising the trip and to the whole group for making the experience so fun. More next Update!

Gina Tagoe

PRAYERS FROM EVERYONE IN THE NEW CIRCUIT

The Prayer Task Group plans to put together lots of prayers, written by people from **each and every church** in our new circuit. Please write a prayer, max 8 lines. and send it to Alison Parker before end of March. (alison.m.parker@googlemail.com) or post to 115 Cliddesden Rd, Basingstoke, RG21 3EY. A prayer-leaflet will, we hope, be available around Easter!

FOR LENT Quiet Day at Silchester Methodist Church on Saturday, 22nd March – 10am till 3pm. Bring lunch, drinks provided. Cost: £6. Everyone – very welcome. Phone Angela on 01256 850432 before 17th March to reserve a place.

NEW-4-US: MESSY CHURCH IN BASINGSTOKE – read all about it in UPDATE 5

Circuit Strap-line

Forever growing in the tree of life

God is listening – are we?

We R all welcome in God's Kingdom

Rooted in God. Growing Christ's people.

These are some suggestions that we have received, are there any more out there?