



UPDATE 7

Circuit 26/4, Southampton District

We, the Implementation Group, do hope all our readers are having a lovely summer. Even more, we hope you are looking forward to our Make a Day of It (details below), and best of all, to all of us working together in the new circuit! First, some dates for your diaries:

- **Sat 16 to Sunday 24 August – the PILGRIMAGE.** Please remember that anyone can take part. There will possibly be more non-walkers than walkers! Why not go to your church, or another one, and greet the intrepid walkers? Then you might just walk with them for 10 mins after the break.
- **Sun 31 Aug – Make a Day of It.** This is the BIG celebration, Welcome and Launch of the Basingstoke and Reading Methodist Circuit. We hope for a big turnout. PLEASE CAN YOU HELP? Anyone with bird-watching and/or photography experience willing to lead a session on this day, please contact Marianne (contact details at end). No specific plans – up to you! Thanks.
- **Wed 17 Sept, 7.30 for 7.45 – the first Circuit Meeting (CM) of our new circuit!** If you currently have a seat on CM, you will have a seat all next Methodist year.

The PAST 4 WEEKS have seen 4 Area Meetings, where there were two focuses: discussion of staffing for the period Sept 2015 onwards; and explaining how our new circuit will function. Those of us who ran them were really pleased with the turn-out and the response! Many thanks. We invited queries, and there were many. Some were answered at the meeting, but for lots of others, the answer had to be delayed Until now, and for Update 8. So, here we go! Our answers are a response to what we think your question means! Do get in touch with us if we have got things wrong.

Q: Why has Reading & Silchester (+ Basingstoke) been singled out?

A: We've not been singled out! The creation of larger circuits is taking place throughout the Methodist church in Britain. In our Southampton District, there were 3 new circuits created in September 2012 and another 1 last year. We are one of another 3 being created this year.

Q: Why "Basingstoke & Reading" rather than "Loddon" Circuit?

A: This was the decision of the majority of our people who responded to the poll about the new circuit name.

Q: How will questions in the future get answered?

A: Refer to the most appropriate person! e.g. Circuit staff (ministers, stewards etc), through Circuit meetings and assemblies. Until September 2014, you can still ask us!

Q: There seem to be lots of ideas but will the resources be available (20-80% rule)?

A: We hope so, but this also relies on the people within the new circuit responding to the new ideas, challenges and opportunities that are presented.

Q: How do we best draw on existing strengths?

A: By being open, *concerned for one another*, and *meeting together* (see *Heb 10: 23-25!*). Let us continue to support, encourage and love each other. We must encourage folk with existing or new ideas to come forward, mustn't we?

Q: Compromising? Are we doing what we always do in our circuit or are we doing things new? Not what we did in Reading & Silchester or Basingstoke but NEW.

A: NEW ideas: Circuit Assembly, GIDs relieving pressure on CSs, no CLT, SiGs empowering people who have an idea.
ESTABLISHED APPROACHES: LPs and WLs but LPs going to new churches. Worship, but some leaders of worship prefer new ideas. There will be a mix of the new & the old. Probably a time of transition!

Q: How will the new circuit improve "life" for Joe (and Jenny) Bloggs in the pew?

Q: How do we encourage normal members of our congregations to be involved with the circuit activities?

A: Unlikely the new circuit itself will make any real difference to Joe & Jenny! However, if typical members (or J/J) want to take a more active part in church and circuit life, then the best step is to go to the first **Circuit Assembly**.

Also, join a Specific Interest Group (SIG) or offer to be part of a Get it Done GID) Group. Take part!

Q: Will GIDs / SIGs know what money they can spend?

A: A SIG will be invited to request money for a particular project.

A: A GID will be given a task, resources, and budget if required, by the Circuit Meeting.

Let's take a break for a lovely article!

THE CHURCH IN A CUPBOARD

Whitley is known within the Reading and Silchester Circuit as 'the church in the cupboard' because, like Caversham Park Village and Woodley Airfield, we use rented premises for worship on Sundays. Our home is now the Scout and Guide Headquarters in Northcourt Avenue.

Our congregation may be elderly in age but we are young in spirit. Always ready to welcome visitors and preachers from around the Circuit. All help to prepare the room for worship and clear up after service. Our membership stands at 20 so when I count 15 in Church I think that's three quarters of our membership - not many churches have that I am sure. On the first Sunday of each month there is a sale of home made produce, the money raised is divided between Church funds and a project we support in South Africa called Lebone. (We also halve the money we receive from our Gift Day) Since we first started to support them in 2001 we have been able to send over £16,000. We receive regular newsletters about their activities and have visits from Avril and Wilhem Synman who run the project. Updating us on the latest developments there which is to include a Village style community for other disadvantaged people David and Penny's daughter Emma has spent time at Lebone in the last 12 months. Our Church meetings, Lunch Club, Coffee morning and Wives Group meet at Tyndale Baptist Church where we have always been made welcome. All these meetings are ecumenical and well attended.

We cater for between 30/40 for lunch on Tuesdays (Joan Eggleton is the 'boss') at 95 helping prepare meals for many younger than herself. Once a month the ministers in our area come for lunch, their numbers can range from 3 - 13 and we often do not know how many are coming!! Friday coffee mornings we serve toasted tea cakes and a drink for £1 and all the money raised during the year goes to various charities, Christian Aid, Feed the Children, Action for Children and many others. Last year alone we were able to give away £1,000. Wives Group meets every two weeks and has a varied programme of speakers and other events. We are most grateful to the Circuit in finding us preachers for our services and for allowing us to continue to stay together for as long as we can. I am reminded how fortunate we are not to have to keep raising money to "prop up our building", and so we can help other causes. Phyllis.

Q: Will Circuit Mtg (CM) be held in all churches or centred on a key few?

A: We understand that the venue will be spread around as much as possible. However, size of building is a factor, & for year 1 all current members continue to have a seat, so a huge CM! New circuit leaders are committed to limiting travelling, where poss.

Q: What difference will the new circuit make to individual churches?

A: To some, very little, but a larger circuit results in more flexibility of resources, a wider pool of Christians with ideas, and (don't you agree?) the very act of changing excites new ideas. Further, we can participate in a wider range of circuit activities and events, plus benefit from the support that our churches and people can offer to each other - perhaps we could encourage some form of 'twinning' between churches with similar challenges.

Q: Why only 2 Circuit Meetings not 4, won't it become rather lengthy?

Q: How will we get it done in two Circuit Meetings?

A: Good point! We are trying to delegate many of the more specific tasks that are normally covered at Circuit Meeting to specific Get It Done (GID) teams who will report to Circuit Meeting, and have a level of authority to take action. Some of the non-business items currently done at CM will shift to the Circuit Assemblies.

Q: Could an extraordinary circuit meeting be called if a decision is needed quickly?

A: Yes, if the subject matter warrants such a decision.

Q: Will our new circuit change Church Assessments?

A: Not this year.

Q: Could each church write a resume of what they do, e.g. activities?

A: What a good idea! This is what a SIG (Special Interest Group) is all about - 2 or 3 people assume responsibility for an idea & take it to the Circuit Assembly. Dear Questioner - why not pick this up? Do get in touch with one of us below to set up a SiG.

Q: How will GIDs be formed? Volunteers?

A: Yes - volunteers please! However, for some GIDS (eg finance, property) a certain expertise is needed, & so **some** relevant people will be invited to join.

We hope to answer the rest of the questions in Update 8. Good wishes, The Team.

Please send your news for the next UPDATE as soon as possible. Tell us a story about your church!

Contact: Terry Ayres hatfield.fcj@virgin.net;

Gill Lawson gill@lawson-net.co.uk

Marianne Sales mariannebunn1610@hotmail.com