



The Methodist Church

NORTH HERTS CIRCUIT

Superintendent Minister: Revd Andrew P Maguire MA BD

Tel: (01462) 646562

Printed copy of the circuit e-newsletter for January 2012

Loving God, you have chosen me and called me to follow you.

Here and now, I respond to that call.

Speak to me, that I may know your will.

Teach me, that I may understand your word.

Renew me and strengthen me to do your work,

and guide me to where I am needed most;

through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.

Gregory Sargent, local preacher, West Norfolk

Let us whose faiths are named differently, find ourselves in each other, love one another and live in peace. **Amen David Furnival, former mission partner, Sri Lanka**

Please send me any news of events that you would like included, Celia

celia35@bopenworld.com

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Circuit news about our Superintendent.

The new Superintendent from next September will be the Revd Malcolm Peacock, currently the Isle of Man Chair. Revd Andrew Maguire will be going to King's Lynn to be Superintendent Minister of the West Norfolk Circuit.

Circuit Network Committee is meeting on Tuesday 31st January at 2.15 at 1 Greenway, Letchworth, SG6 3UG.

Free Church Services in St Albans Cathedral

Any of you would be welcome to attend one or more of these services: -

Wednesday 1st. February 2012 at 11a.m.

Preacher: The Reverend Simon Carver, Minister of the Dagnall Street Baptist Church, St Albans. At Noon join a Fellowship Lunch in the Abbots Kitchen.

Please place the order for your meal before the service.

Sunday 19th. February 2012 at 6-30p.m.

Taize Chants with sermon and time for prayer and reflection.

Wednesday 7th. March 2012 at 11a.m.

Preacher: The Reverend Father Brian Reynolds. Catholic Priest at St Thomas More, Wheathamstead and the Catholic Ecumenical Chaplain St. Albans Cathedral.

At Noon join a Fellowship Lunch in the Abbots Kitchen.

Please place the order for your meal before the service.

Revd. Peter Hudson, Free Church Ecumenical Chaplain, 01727 812076

Lectures at Hinde Street Methodist church

Hinde Street celebrates its part in 250 years of Methodism in London's West End.

Hinde Street Church maintains a strong tradition of thoughtful preaching, radical theology and a passion for social justice. It consists of three different Sunday congregations, drawing people from nearby and from across London - and every week visitors to London share worship with us.

Hugh Price Hughes Lecture Series 2012 - "Belonging Together"

All lectures are on Tuesdays at 7.30pm and are free. They last approximately 45 minutes and are followed by a 30 minute question session. Refreshments are served before and after and ending generally about 8.45pm. The first 2 lectures are: -

FEBRUARY 14th by Hugh Starkey "Learning to Live Together?"

MARCH 13th by Frances Ward "Political Friendship"

Mon 5th March Daffodil day at Central Hall Westminster 10am-5pm

Daffodil day is a Spring celebration arranged for men and women at Central hall and is always uplifting and stimulating with speakers, drama and music.

"A coach has been booked and about 35 plan to go. Please let us know if any more wish to join us." The coach will collect people at Hitchin, Letchworth and Stevenage. Please could you let Mary O'Neil (01462 685501) or Helen Maguire (01462 646562) if you would like to come.

CIRCUIT CELEBRATION SERVICE - 29th April 2012 11.00 am

Speaker: Revd. Dr Martyn Atkins General Secretary of the Methodist Church

Theme: Discipleship The morning service on 29th April will be held at the Stevenage Arts and Leisure Centre starting at 11.00 a.m. John Sharman will liaise with each church to ensure that the transport plans are in place, that all people are covered and that transport will be available from the usual place of worship for those who normally walk or use public transport. As we hope that whole Circuit and partnership churches will be worshipping together, this particular service will be one of the high points of the period. It would therefore be a good service to invite friends and family, who perhaps do not attend church regularly or at all, to come to. However we cannot exceed the maximum limit for the venue and hence we will be issuing "Invitation to Attend" cards a few weeks before the event. These cards will be numbered so that we know how many have been issued. You will therefore need cards for the guests that you have invited. Please also remember that there will also be a form so that we know how many children to expect and what special requirements they may have.

A new "spring" poster will be available soon and you may hear some information on Three Counties Radio whom we have contacted. Keep looking out for the posters, listen for announcements and read the Circuit Newsletter. Be ready to receive your "Invitation to Attend" card.

Discipleship is always challenging but what a journey we are on! God is an amazing God and will lead us forward in our discipleship. He is and will be with us in all that we do and it is He that we worship.

Circuit Book Club

Next meeting is on Wed 15th February at 4 Benslow Rise, Hitchin at 8.00 pm. The book being looked at is Jeanette Winterson's "Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit". Available perhaps from a local library, or from Amazon at reasonable price. contact Sue Chastney - 01462 451831

St. Faiths Pantomime Fri 17th February 2012 at 7 pm, & Sat 18th February at 3 pm and 7 pm.

This year's pantomime is **Aladdin** and we are doing three performances:

Prices are £5 or £2 if you are under 12. Please contact the box office for tickets on 01462 451015. Warning: we perform to full houses so you will need to buy your tickets in advance, as well as prepare yourselves for pantomime puns and participation.

Andrew Surry

"More Than Gold" encourages churches to respond to the 2012 Olympics

We all know that the 2012 Olympics present a once in a lifetime opportunity.

There are many suggestions on the internet at <http://www.morethangold.org.uk> about how your church can be involved. Start by appointing a Gold Champion – a Church Representative

Start early with talking, praying, planning and dreaming –

Involve every section of the church – youth and children, evangelism coordinators, teachers, mission committees, social responsibility activists, and more

Start with what is there already – what is the church already doing that can be given an Olympic overlay? Alpha? Holiday clubs? Schools outreach? Guest services?

Identify how the local community is engaging – and look for ways to join in rather than compete

Join with other churches to plan major initiatives for the community like Community Festivals with a big screen, children's holiday clubs, etc

Sacred Space – This will be a new, regular event to start at Norton in 2012.

Sacred Space is a meditative, prayerful and quiet place, where people can "be" and explore their journey with God in an environment that has free movement, prayer stations and places of reflection. There will be times to use the senses, singing, listening, music, smells, and tactile experiences. The shape and form of Sacred Space takes on the Taize, Iona and Celtic traditions. This is beginning at Norton on the first Sunday evening of each month from February 5th 5.30 to 6.30 pm.

Extracts from the January edition of the Methodist church E-news

The praise bus

As part of the Olympics celebration, Escalls Chapel is sending a half open top bus around the country, ahead of the Olympic flame, with local Christian bands/groups, playing in rotation, bringing praise to the nation.

Three different groups of musicians need to be on the bus, each morning, before the Olympic flame starts its journey. They will need to be on board at around 5.30am – 6.00am in order to set off before the police close the roads! There will be various stops but the musicians will remain with the bus, playing continuously, in rotation (one hour playing, two hours off) until it reaches its destination, ahead of the Olympic flame at about 6.00pm or 7.00pm.

Escalls Methodist Chapel in Penzance are leading on this initiative called 'The Journey' and describe it as one of the most exciting journeys ever undertaken in the UK.

Can you or your church help with either bands, solo artists, choirs or groups to join the bus as it travels around the country, or by offering hospitality to those on board when they get to your part of the UK?

The Big Read 2012

People and churches across the country are getting ready to take a fresh look at the Mark's Gospel during Lent with the Big Read 2012.

The Big Read is part of the Big Bible project, an online digital community that promotes regular Bible reading and engagement with contemporary culture. It organised the successful Big Read 2011 which looked at Matthew's Gospel.

Everyone will be using Tom Wright's book, Lent for Everyone: Mark. House groups will be able to take advantage of free online study materials, including week-by-week group resources, videos and audio reflections.

Latest news from the Methodist Church in Fiji

On 7 January 2012 the government in Fiji lifted the public emergency regulations

which seriously restricted the activities of the Methodist Church there. However they were immediately replaced by a revised public order act.

This act means that the Methodist Church in Fiji is now allowed to apply for permission to hold meetings, rather than not even being allowed to apply. They are now trying to organise themselves as it has been three years since many Church meetings have been held.

The Revd Tevita Nawadra, the assistant general secretary of the Methodist Church in Fiji, has written to thank “our friends and partners who have shared our stories and given time to think and pray for the Church in Fiji; their prayers have been answered. May God bless them all. We still have a long way to go still, but it is starting anyway”.

Please continue to pray for the nation—a special prayer is available below.

A prayer for Fiji:

God of truth and love, Lord of the day and the night

We pray for our brothers and sisters in Fiji.

They have day while we have night and night during our day

but we walk alongside them in this difficult time

together we need the light of your truth and the warmth of your love in every hour.

May all the people of Fiji work together for good

The Methodist Church, the Government, the Hindus, the Christians

Till justice rolls like the waters of the ocean

And peace rests as securely as the land. Amen.

Background

The Fijian Methodist Church is under increasing pressure from the country’s government, led by Commodore Bainimarama, which has forced the Church to cancel its annual Conference and choir festivals until 2014. Local districts and circuits are also having their activities restricted, with administrative meetings banned.

Revd Stephen Poxon, ex-president of the British Methodist Conference and Secretary of the Methodist Missionary Society, said; “In the UK, it’s easy to take our religious freedoms for granted. The Methodist Church in Fiji simply desires to worship God and serve the people of Fiji with their ministry, but the government’s unreasonable restrictions are making the Church’s daily life almost impossible. Through fasting and prayer, we want to show our solidarity with our Fijian brothers and sisters.”

All members of the Fiji Methodist Church Standing Committee have been charged with attending an unauthorized meeting (held last April), and have been held for questioning by police. A number of church ministers have also been accused of spying on the government, although the allegations have yet to be substantiated.

The Fijian Church has requested a meeting with the government to discuss the ban and explore alternatives. ‘We are a people who believe in knocking,’ said one minister, ‘even ‘til midnight!’ However one superintendent was overheard saying he would hold meetings anyway, and was reported to the military, who took him in for questioning.

Despite the pressures, the Fijian Church’s chaplains continue to serve the police and the military, leading devotions frequently in churches and barracks.

Under new legislation, speaking out against the government is deemed treason, and sending criticisms of the regime to or from abroad will be regarded as sedition. As any such criticism (whether made in Fiji or abroad) is now being treated as a criminal act.

For further details about items in E-news ring—Methodist Church House 25 Marylebone Road London NW1 5JR Main Switchboard: 020 7486 5502