

## A summary of what is happening in our Circuit....



### Greetings from the Superintendent

Dear Friends,  
As we journey towards the end of the Methodist Connexional year, I wanted to say a huge thank you.

Thank you for the ways in which you continue to be church in your communities. Thank you for who you are, created in the image of God, siblings in Christ. Thank you for the ways in which you share the all-embracing love of God with those in need. Thank you for the faithful and sometimes thankless work of keeping things going. Thank you for speaking out against injustice.

This year we have faced a new beginning together and I'm grateful for your care, support and willingness to share your stories of joy and challenge with myself and the Circuit Leadership Team. There is much to be wrestled with and to do, but we do so, secure in the knowledge that in all things God is with us. In the midst of challenge and change we are called to reflect the image of the one who created us. One of my favourite poets, Mary Oliver, wrote these words:

*Maybe our world will grow kinder eventually. Maybe the desire to make something beautiful is the piece of God that is inside each of us.*

My prayer is that in our life together as churches and a Circuit we may discern and see the beautiful in and through one another and continue to strive for a kinder, fairer world.

Every blessing,  
Miriam

### Let's End Poverty

If you walk or drive past the Methodist Church in Watlington you may notice a large banner tied to our railings proclaiming, "Let's End Poverty". We first heard about the movement in the newsletter from our Circuit in March. It told us that the Joint Public Issues Team are part of the *Let's End Poverty* movement. It's a diverse movement of people and organisations who are united behind a vision for a UK where poverty cannot keep anyone down.

*Let's End Poverty* are campaigning to get this on the political agenda. We need our political leaders to take urgent, coordinated action to

break poverty's grip. In our Circuit let's challenge politicians to say what they will do. In April we were given the opportunity to order a banner for the church which we duly did and now it is on display, and we heartily endorse its sentiment and will be supporting the campaign. For more information.

<https://letsendpoverty.co.uk/>

We have four banners in the circuit at Watlington, Rose Hill Wesley Memorial and Lime Walk.



## Election Hustings

In the north of the Circuit, Kidlington have hosted a Churches Together election husting on the theme of poverty and Revd Paul Carter has chaired a husting event in Woodstock.

## News from Woodstock

Work towards the **Church's Future Story** continues with interviews and feedback received from church members as well as the local surgery, schools and other churches. This has been followed by an Away Day on 8th June, facilitated by Circuit Steward Paul Spray. Four priorities have been identified:

**Finance** – working to identify a new treasurer and ways to boost income.

**Communication and Publicity** – building relationships with our community and publicising what we do and offer.

**Worship** – reviewing services and meeting the wider needs of our community.

**Ecumenical Partnerships** – developing relationships with the other churches in Woodstock to provide a caring and connected Christian presence in Woodstock

We are looking to form a team around each of the above to identify clear, achievable actions, with dates and owners, for a Mission Plan to take forward to the Church Council.

## A Visit from the National Methodist Youth Brass Band

It was great to have the National Methodist Youth Brass Band staying at Wesley Memorial for the weekend 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> June. The building was filled with music from Friday evening until Sunday lunchtime. As well as performing at the concert on Saturday evening and leading our worship on Sunday they enjoyed a weekend of fun and fellowship exploring the theme *The kingdom of God*. We are grateful for their music and witness. The band were very grateful for the welcome and hospitality. The concert on Saturday



## News From Great Milton

Miriam with her Mum and Dad, Celia and Roy, at Great Milton on Trinity Sunday.



Our congregation enjoying lunch in glorious weather



You can access recorded services every week on the Circuit website.

<https://www.oxfordmethodists.org.uk/resources/worship/podcasts.html>



## Bladon Junior Church

Members of Bladon Junior Church recorded a goodbye message to the departing district chair Helen Cameron in the form of a short song. Helen has led worship in Bladon and attended our shows and concerts and we are very sorry to see her go. However, we are really looking forward to meeting her replacement Sonia Hicks who we hear is also a big musical theatre fan! Last month we staged a concert called The Magic of the Musicals with songs from shows including Back to the Future, the Addams Family, Les Misérables, Grease and the Greatest Showman. We also celebrated our 181st Anniversary with a special service during which over 40 BJC members were presented with a commemorative medal. In July, Paul will be leading a special service to welcome more friends as church members, bringing our membership total to over 20. Although the Junior Church will break up in mid-July for the holidays there will still be lots happening at church over the summer with Alicia staging a "show in a week" production of The Little Mermaid. We will then start to prepare the church for our autumn production - which we hope to announce very soon! We are also thrilled that we have been invited to perform songs from the show at 3Generate again this year



## Farewell to Revd Helen Cameron



On Saturday, 9th June, the Oxford Circuit was honoured and delighted to host the farewell service for Revd Dr Helen Cameron as retiring Chair of the Northampton District. Helen had asked for this service not to be about her but about God, the one who had called her to serve the church and the one whom she has humbly followed throughout her ministry. It was a thoroughly Methodist service! Helen was presented with a picture to adorn the walls of her home when she does finally "sit down". But, before that, she becomes the President of the Methodist Church in Britain. We wish her well for all that is yet to come.

## Oxford Pride

Wesley Memorial attended Oxford Pride. This was a very positive experience, and the church's presence was very well received. They were joined by friends from New Road Baptist Church, Wantage Baptist Church, and Cowley Road Methodist Church.

We intend to attend this event regularly in future and would welcome friends from the circuit taking part with us.



## Features – Films at Tackley

**Our Mission** - Films are a wonderful way to explore some of the issues we all face in our daily lives. They allow us to reflect on all sorts of questions at a safe distance as we engage with the characters.

**Features** has now been running again in Tackley for just over a year. Each month we turn our church into a makeshift cinema for the local community. We have shown a variety of films, some old and some new, some light-hearted and some a bit more challenging. The one thing that they all have in common is that they tell a good story well.

As we watch the films together, we may even glimpse God at work in one way or another, whether we call him by that name or not. Above all, we hope that those attending will enjoy the films and through them come to a greater understanding of the world we live in, the people we share it with, and the things we long and hope for in our community life together. It took some time to restart **Features** as we needed to understand the licensing requirements for showing films to the public. We also needed to replace some equipment. We were very grateful to the Circuit for the grant to purchase a new projector.

Our films and refreshments are free, but we have a donations box for the charity of the month.

Our film license means that we are unable to externally advertise the name of the films. This means that some rather cryptic posters appear around the village a couple of weeks before each film.

People can also sign up to receive details of upcoming films by emailing - [featuresfilms@gmail.com](mailto:featuresfilms@gmail.com)

Alison and Chris Matthews



The circuit have appointed a new part-time circuit PA to work with Revd Paul Carter, Revd Stephen Spain and Community Chaplain at Rose Hill, Liz Spain. Ruth Leach is a steward at Woodstock Methodist Church and starts work in September. We are looking forward to welcoming her onto the staff team.

[circuitpa@oxfordmethodists.org.uk](mailto:circuitpa@oxfordmethodists.org.uk)



## Local Preacher Accreditation Service for Sizwe Mkwanzazi

The service took place on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> May with a 4-way link on Zoom from Wesley Mem to our local friends, Sizwe's South African friends and family, and Sizwe himself who, to our surprise, was in a Morocco for a workshop. A good congregation sang heartily and applauded enthusiastically when Sizwe expressed in his testimony his calling and his thanks to Oxford and the people who had helped him on the journey. Miriam led the service and asked the prescribed questions, Paul Spray preached, and Grace Samkange led the prayers of Intercession. Phil Crockett and Shelby Knighten read the scriptures and Margaret Sawyer delivered the President's letter to new Local Preachers. It was an inspiring occasion for all those present, and a great joy to welcome supporters from all over the circuit.

