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God's Table: An Invitation for All



*But the angel said to them,
"Do not be afraid; for see-
I am bringing you good news
of great joy for all people...."*

Luke 2:10 (NRSV)

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

We have probably heard too much about parties over the last few weeks: parties that should not have happened last Christmas; parties that were cancelled and parties that may not happen this year.

Most responsible people have been sticking to the COVID rules and guidance so they can help to protect their families and neighbours as well as themselves. We will need to learn to have parties and to celebrate again when the pandemic has finally receded and we can learn to live with the virus as we do with many other viruses. The pandemic has made it hard to keep up the connections that are so important to healthy and fulfilling living. Simply meeting people on a flat screen is just not the same, and those who do not have access to the technology can be even more excluded.

The angels' message to the shepherds was about the God who makes connections. In the coming of the baby born in Bethlehem God was connecting with people and all of creation in a new way: God became one of us and was reaching out to all of humanity. In that action God was opening up the possibility of humankind becoming reconnected by making a nonsense of all the artificial barriers of ethnicity, gender, sexuality, nationality, ability etc. that we construct between ourselves. The image that Jesus often used to explain this was that God was throwing a massive party to which every-one is invited and where there is room and sufficient for all.

We have experienced loss and grief over the last two years and know about conflict, the plight of refugees and the effects of the climate emergency. So, the message of the angels that Jesus' birth is hope and joy for all people is one that still needs to be heard today. While humbly recognising that we have not always been very good at living this good news we should encourage one another to reach out into our circles of friends and communities with the angels' message. To make connections and assure people that our churches pray for them and care about the things that matter to our communities.

With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year,

John Hellyer

Rev'd John Hellyer

The Call of Advent

The call of Advent urges us
to watch and wait, prepare
for the promised second coming
with which nothing shall compare.
None can know the imminence
of when this will take place,
or perceive the wonder to behold
when first we see his face.

He will come not as the baby
that we now honour and celebrate,
but as the King who sacrificed all
that we may enter Heaven's gate.

No longer in the arms of Mary
nor in a manger laid,
in spirit, though, still with us
our ransom he has paid.

The shepherds have long gone
who travelled through the night
to offer homage and young lambs
to the world's one true light.

The Magi, too, have since passed on
beyond the leading star
they followed, so they too could bring
their gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

The angels may now be silent
but it's certain they will sing again
when Jesus comes in triumph
with his glorious heavenly train.

Have you heard the call of Advent?
unmistakably loud and clear,
carried upon the drifting air
audible to the listening ear.

We now are the shepherds and Magi,
in human form the angels too,
for we carry the divine inheritance
of their legacy of grace and truth.
Where lies our hearts this Christmas
in the presents and turkey roast?
or safe in the precious hands of he
whose everlasting love we boast.

Adele Garner

Ethical Pye!



Saturday 26 February 2022

A second opportunity to join with Revd Dr Jonathan Pye to consider how ethical principles apply in practice. Jonathan will explore contemporary issues in what will be a fascinating session. More details to follow.

ANGELS

Knitters at St Mark's have created a heavenly host of 240 angels. During Advent, each person who comes into the church as part of any of our hire groups will be given an angel with the message: 'Long ago, angels brought God's message of love, joy and peace to all people. The gift of this angel comes with the hope your Christmas will be filled with love, joy and peace, from St Mark's Methodist Church.'

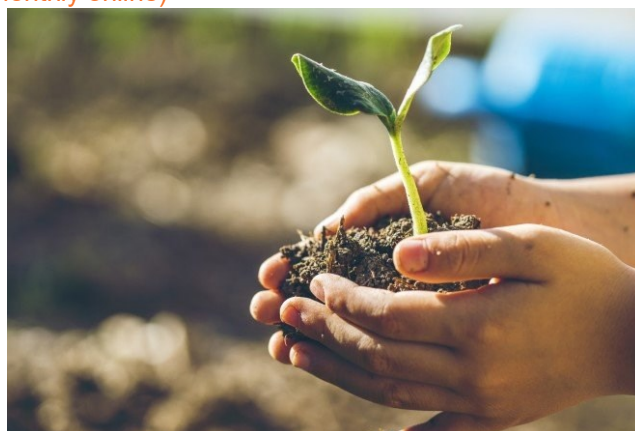


Church Planting Intensive

Residential event: Cliff College, 4—6 February 2022 (then monthly online)

We are keen to equip our pioneers and planters. A key part of this is the launch of the Church Planting Intensive. The Church Planting Intensive is a fully-funded year-long hybrid course. It begins with a residential at Cliff College 4-6 February 2022 and then we meet online each month on the 1st Thursday between 7-9pm.

The course will be a mix of teaching and reflection, times of prayer and deepening our calls, a place to celebrate and be vulnerable, growth as individuals and of the projects we are passionate about. It is going to be a wonderful journey together! If you would like to join this year's cohort please fill in the form via this link to register your interest. Places are limited to 40, so get in quick if you are interested.



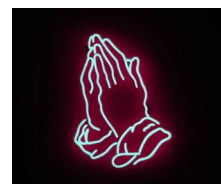
If you have any queries please email pioneering@methodistchurch.org.uk

SOUTH WEST DAY OF PRAYER

President elect and Chair of the Plymouth and Exeter District, Revd Graham Thompson, has called for a day of prayer on 6 January 2022;

Please will you join us in setting aside some time, alone or with others, to pray for all those:

- bereaved by Coronavirus
- suffering lasting effects of 'long Covid'
- working in health and other services
- who have lost their jobs or businesses
- whose faith is challenged
- anxious about the future
- elected to serve in this and other nations
- working to find treatments for Covid19
- without access to vaccines (remembering particularly partners in India)
- leading our churches to plan mission



And so much more!

Please also use the Day of Prayer to ask what you are called to do and be as God's church.



You are invited to join Langley House Trust's online Christmas Carol service

Wednesday 16 December at 6pm

Join with our clients, staff, volunteers & supporters to celebrate the significance of 'Home' this Christmas!

For more details please visit: langleyhousetrust.org/carolservice2021

Training event – Using the Walking with Micah justice conversation resources



Tuesday 25 January 7-8:15pm

Wednesday 26 January 1-2:15pm

In February we will be launching the Walking With Micah project's "justice conversations". These pre-launch webinars will be an opportunity to find out how you can be involved with running conversations where you are. They are open to anyone who would like to find out more about the resources available to help you get involved.

Find out more about Walking With Micah on the Methodist Church website [Walking with Micah \(methodist.org.uk\)](http://Walking with Micah (methodist.org.uk)) and watch a short film from the project's leader, Rachel Lampard.

Launching in January, Everyone an Evangelist is a course designed to help groups from local churches and circuits explore the ways you and your church community are called to share your faith and to grow in confidence as evangelists. Find out more at [Everyone an Evangelist \(methodist.org.uk\)](http://Everyone an Evangelist (methodist.org.uk))

EVERYONE AN EVANGELIST

A Methodist Way of Life - Intergenerational Resources

When we worship across different generations, we grow by learning from people with different experiences to our own. We've created outlines for intergenerational worship to offer creative ways your community can deepen its relationship with God and explore and introduce A Methodist Way of Life, together. Find out more here.

If you are new to A Methodist Way of Life take a look at the animation at [An introduction to A Methodist Way of Life - YouTube](#)

2021 STATISTICS COLLECTION

The Methodist Church Online site is now open for the 2021 statistics collection.

Due to the present circumstances we are not collecting attendance data; all that is needed is the current membership figure and the in-year movements (such as office holders and pastoral contacts).

Further information can be found at:

Forms and guidance: www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/statistics-for-mission/online-data-entry/

Frequently Asked Questions: www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/statistics-for-mission/faqs/

The data entry site will be open until 31 January 2022

CHRISTMAS CAROLS FOR ALL THE FAMILY

Quedgeley Methodist Church

**Saturday 18 December - 5.30pm to 6.30pm
with music from the Gloucester Brass Band**

No entrance charge—however donations will be gratefully received and split between the work of the church, Gloucester Brass Band and the Spring Centre children's charity



WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? WHAT MIGHT MISSION LOOK LIKE POST-COVID?

10am—3pm Saturday 12 March 2022

An opportunity to meet locally and connect regionally as the South West Methodist Region to think together about how the Church comes out of Covid.

Keynote Speaker – Gary Hopkins

Ministry Development Officer for the Methodist Church

Workshops to be led by a variety of people from across the Region, with creative and inspiring stories and ideas.

This will be a linked event from Plymouth Central Hall, but linking also to venues in Bristol and Cornwall Districts. We are excited to see faces and input from across the region as we all explore what mission looks like - and what's next for our church communities!

For further details please contact Bridget at downb@methodistchurch.org.uk



GROWING CHURCH MINISTRY WITH FAMILIES

There's a great opportunity to do some learning about working with families and developing skills by joining us for the short course at Cliff College from 24 to 28 January 2021.

From theological thinking, nurturing family wellbeing to understanding more about their life today – the course gives an excellent foundation for ministry with families. It is especially relevant at this time as churches seek to support families effectively.

More information at www.cliffcollege.ac.uk

Local Preachers and Worship Leaders Meeting

*The meeting scheduled for 2 March has been changed due to Advance Safeguarding Module training taking place at that time. The meeting will now be held on **Thursday 10 March**.*

North East Somerset and Bath Methodist Circuit

has a vacancy for a

**PART-TIME Children, Young
People & Family Worker**
for Keynsham Methodist Church

16 hours per week

(flexible working, which may include
some evenings/Sundays)

Salary £8320 (£10.00 per hour)

We are seeking an enthusiastic and gifted person
to enhance and develop our existing work with
children, youth and families, to enable them to
explore the Christian faith in a creative, dynamic
way and to grow in their faith.

To request an application pack contact the
Church Office on 0117 9149408 or email:
office@keynshammethodistchurch.co.uk

Application Closing date: **Thursday 6th January 2022**

It is an occupational requirement that the applicant has an active Christian faith in that it
requires the nurture of Christian faith according to the doctrines of the Methodist Church.

Registered Charity Number: 1129493



Jigsaw Library

THE WELCOME CAFÉ
Hucclecote Methodist Church



FairTrade

Opening Times

Mondays 5.30pm - 8pm

Wednesdays 3.30pm - 4.30pm

Thursdays 10am - Noon

Saturdays 10am - Noon (1st & 3rd in month)

ALL ARE WELCOME HERE



Cake



Book Exchange

VACANCY - SOCIAL & CLIMATE JUSTICE PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Andy Rickell will be coming to the end of his term of office as the Social and Climate Justice Portfolio Holder next August and we will need to recruit a successor. If you are interested in this role please send your expression of interest to Revd John Hellyer by 31 January 2022.

ROLE TITLE

Social and Climate Justice Portfolio Holder

PURPOSE

To encourage, support, advise and inform the Circuit on matters of social, economic and environmental justice.

Main Tasks

- Prepare reports for Circuit Executive and Assembly as required.
- Ensure the Social and Climate Justice team is established and meeting.
- Convene and chair the Social and Climate Justice group as appropriate or appoint a chair.
- With the Social and Climate Justice team, to oversee on behalf of the Circuit, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and EcoChurch and Climate Emergency elements of the Circuit's Mission Plan.
- Maintain an interest in current events and issues in the news.
- Keep up to date with the Circuit, connexional policies and Methodist Conference decisions on current events as appropriate.
- Maintain an overview of multi-faith activities in the County.
- Ensure the appointment of, and encouragement of, an Inter-Faith Officer who will be responsible for informing and advising the Circuit on issues to do with other faiths and relationships between different faiths.

POSSIBLE TASKS

POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES

- To organise agreed projects or activities in connection with this area of work and/or disseminate information.
- Explore channels to allow different perspectives to be heard in areas such as social, economic and environmental integrity and to maintain creatively the tensions created.
- To develop initiatives as requested by the Circuit Assembly and Executive or arising from the Social and Climate Justice team.

REPORTING TO

Circuit Assembly, The Circuit Executive, Superintendent Minister

RESPONSIBILITY FOR OTHERS

The person will not have any formal management or supervisory responsibilities.

RELATIONSHIPS

INTERNAL (THE CIRCUIT)

Inter-faith Officer

Social Justice Officer

Climate Justice Officer

Public Issues Officer

Disability Advisor

District EDI Officer

EXTERNAL (WIDER CHURCH AND COMMUNITY)

The appropriate officers in the Bristol Methodist District.

The connexional Joint Public Issues Team

VACANCY - SOCIAL & CLIMATE JUSTICE PORTFOLIO HOLDER (CONT)

MEETINGS TO ATTEND

Circuit Executive (at least 3 time per year.)

Circuit Assembly (3 times per year.)

Circuit Social and Climate Justice Group

TIME COMMITMENT

As far as possible the hours required will be flexible to suit the person appointed but some work will entail deadlines imposed by the Methodist Church and that fit the calendar of Circuit events.

SUPPORT

Support will be given by the Superintendent.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

- The person appointed will need access to a computer capable of using Microsoft Office 365.
- High speed internet connection.
- Access to telephone.

EXPENSE

- Travel expenses will be paid at the agreed connexional rate for volunteers.
- Receipted expenses agreed in advance with the person in support, necessarily incurred in the performance of the duties, will be reimbursed.
- Any agreed training costs.

REVIEW PROCEDURE

This role is subject to annual appointment by the Circuit Assembly. Appointments will not normally be renewed after six successive years.

SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

ESSENTIAL

- Recent active engagement in one or more of the issues related to the portfolio.
- Membership of a Methodist Church (or Ecumenical Partnership) in the Gloucestershire Circuit.
- Commitment to serving the Circuit within the framework of its agreed Mission Plan.
- Commitment to collaborative, team working.
- Ability to communicate effectively in writing and verbally.
- Effective administration skills.

SAFEGUARDING AND SAFER RECRUITMENT

This appointment will be subject to the Circuit Safer Recruitment policy.

Online Foundation & Foundation Refresher Safeguarding Training Courses - 2022

I estimate that there are about 150 volunteers in our Circuit who should be participating in a Foundation/Refresher Course at this present time. It is unlikely that the Circuit can organise face-to-face training before the Summer. If you need Foundation level training you may like to consider attending an online course organised by the Methodist Church South-West Region Learning Network. If this is you and you are confident with computers and can use zoom facilities, please register for a training course as soon as possible.

Creating Safer Space



**Safeguarding children, young people
and vulnerable adults**

ONLINE: Foundation Module – Creating Safer Space

- 8 February 2022 7pm www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/copy-of-methodist-foundation-module-safeguarding-creating-space-registration-159103780691
- 12 May 2022 9:30am www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/methodist-foundation-module-safeguarding-creating-space-registration-159103937159

For all enquiries, please contact Bridget Down, Learning Network E: downb@methodistchurch.org.uk

Online Advance Level Safeguarding Training Courses - 2022

There is a new system in place in which I have to register all applicants with South West Learning Network for Online Advance Level Training. I have this week registered 36 applicant for this course and a further 20 people are waiting for face-to-face training to re-commence.

On registration to the on-line learning platform, delegates will be given the booking link to sign off your learning journey at the relevant gathered session. Please note you cannot attend a gathered session until you have completed all of the online modules. For online participants, you might like to note the dates of the future gathered sessions to give you a date to work to:-

- 10 February – Advanced Gathered Session – 9.30am
- 2 March – Advanced Gathered Session – 7pm
- 16 May – Advanced Gathered Session – 7pm

Peter Gardner - Circuit Safeguarding Officer E: safeguarding@gloscircuit.co.uk



Would you like to train as a Mental Health First Aider?

This is a vital skill to support people in these challenging times.

Four online courses are on offer - each with four sessions plus a need to complete self learning at home for which materials will be provided.

Course A - 15,17,22,24 March 09:30-12:00

Course B - 29,31 March, 5,7 April 12:30-15:00

Course C - 26,28 April, 3,5 May 12:30-15:00

Course D - 21,23,28,30 June 09:30-12:00

Places will be limited to 16 per course.

Cost will be £50 per person (payable with booking and non-refundable) - this is being heavily subsidised from the £300 per person fee usually charged by MHFA England. Bookings will open in the New Year.

DIVERSITY AND THE CHURCH

St Mark's Cheltenham are hosting a Café Church service on Sunday 9 January 2022 at 6.30pm with Revd Rachel Leather and Andy Rickell with the theme of Diversity and the Church.

Andy was one of the leading radical advocates of the disability rights movement for 20 years, including a controversial opinion piece in the Guardian when he criticised the largest disability charities. He was on a shortlist of two to be appointed as the Disability Commissioner at the Equality and Human Rights Commission. He thinks if we learn how to welcome disabled people properly in our churches, it will teach us how to welcome everyone in our communities into church. Expect some honest, forthright but positive thoughts and an open dialogue about what churches could be doing to be truly welcoming and inclusive to everyone including disabled people.

This service is being hosted via Zoom and everyone is welcome to join in. Please contact Revd Rachel Leather for the Zoom link.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY...

2022		
Monday 3 January		Preaching availability closes for Spring 2022 Quarter
Thursday 6 January		Section Planning opens for Spring 2022 Quarter
Wednesday 12 January	2pm	Social & Climate Justice Group
Thursday 13 January		Section Planning closes for Spring 2022 Quarter
Thursday 13 January	7.30pm	Finance Support Group
Monday 31 January		Deadline for Statistics for Mission returns
Tuesday 1 February		Spring Quarter Preaching Plan available
Thursday 3 February	9.30am	Manse Group
Tuesday 8 February	TBA	Circuit Mission Group
Tuesday 8 February	9.30am	Property Group
Thursday 17 February	7.30pm	Circuit Treasurers Meeting
Thursday 3 March	9.30am	Circuit Executive
Thursday 10 March	7.30pm	Local Preachers & Worship Leaders Meeting
Sunday 20 March	3pm	Circuit Assembly
Monday 4 April	9.30am	Property Group
Wednesday 6 April	2pm	Social & Climate Justice Group
Thursday 28 April	9.30am	Circuit Executive
Sunday 22 May	3pm	Circuit Assembly
Monday 6 June	7.30pm	Local Preachers & Worship Leaders Meeting - Central
Tuesday 7 June	7.30pm	Local Preachers & Worship Leaders Meeting - North
Wednesday 8 June	7.30pm	Local Preachers & Worship Leaders Meeting - South
Thursday 9 June	7.30pm	Local Preachers & Worship Leaders Meeting - West
Wednesday 13 July	2pm	Social & Climate Justice Group

Something to include in the newsletter? We'd love to hear from you!

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www.gloucestershiremethodist.org.uk



Gloucestershire Methodist Circuit



@GloucestershireMethodists

SERVICES AROUND OUR CIRCUIT AT CHRISTMAS

Christmas Eve

Bishops Cleeve - Holy Communion Service with Revd Rachel Leather at 4pm

Cirencester Ashcroft - Christmas Service (Local Arrangement) at 9pm

Clements End - Candlelight Communion Service with Revd Michelle Ireland

Drybrook - Christmas Worship with Revd Denise Hargreaves at 11.30pm

Fairford - Reflective Communion with Revd Roger Scoones at 7pm

Nailsworth - Carols by Candlelight with Revd Esther Mason at 6.30pm

Pillowell - Christmas Worship with Revd Steve Ward at 6pm

St John's Northgate - Holy Communion with Revd John Kime at 7pm

South Cerney - SHELTER Service (Local Arrangement) at 5pm

Whaddon St Michael - All Age Crib Service with Revd Martin Turner at 4pm

Whaddon St Michael - Midnight Communion with Revd Martin Turner at 11.30pm

Christmas Day

At Home Service - Led by Revd John McNeill and available at 8am

Aylburton - Christmas Day Worship with Revd Michelle Ireland at 10.30am

Bailey Lane End - Christmas Day Worship with Revd Denise Hargreaves at 10.30am

Bethesda - Christmas Day Worship with Revd Naomi Cooke at 10am

Bishop's Cleeve - Christmas Day Worship with Revd Rachel leather at 10.30am

Cam - Christmas Day Worship with Revd Phil Summers at 9am

Cirencester Ashcroft - Christmas Day Worship (Local Arrangement) at 10.30am

Coalway - Christmas Day Worship with David Norman at 10am

Drybrook - United service at Bailey Lane End at 10.30am

Fairford - Christmas Day Worship (Local Arrangement) at 10.30am

Hucclecote - Christmas Day Worship with Revd John Hellyer at 10.30am

Lonsdale Road - Christmas Day Worship with Revd Andrew Biggs at 10.30am

Nailsworth - Christmas Day Service with Revd Esther Mason at 10.30am

St Mark's - Christmas Day Worship with Revd Steve Ward at 10.30am

Boxing Day

Bishop's Cleeve - United Service at St Mark's at 10am

St Mark's - Boxing Day Service with Revd Rachel Leather at 10am, all welcome

