

CIRCUIT NEWS

LINCOLN METHODIST 17/02

AUTUMN 2020

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Navigating the future

Where do we want to go?

Where are we now?

How do we get there?

Are there any obstacles in our way?

How may they be overcome?

Let us pray for our Lord's guidance.

Autumn 2020



Over the last few weeks, I have found great comfort in being able to watch F1 on the television. It was a passion of my dad's and both of my brothers. Over the years my taste in motor sport has changed, from Rally Cross, to Superbikes and then to F1.

I remember going to a rally cross meeting as a teenager and of course I really wanted to be a rally cross driver. The more I learnt about it I found that it was not just sitting there driving but having complete confidence in your navigator. They were to forewarn you of the road ahead which had many twists and

turns.

A few weeks ago, I shared a video from an American Minister called Rev Shane Bishop with the Circuit Leadership Team. There were two main things on his mind regarding the coming out of complete lockdown. Firstly, that our work on sharing the gospel remains the same and secondly, he speaks of having to navigate the future of the church on a moment by moment basis. Overall, he believes it will be 10 years until we reach the new normal. On this journey we will make decisions, but it will be most likely that we will have to change some of those decisions as we navigate the future.

At this point in time none of us know what the future holds as far as church goes. There will be changes, there will be closures and there will be

new and exciting thing to start. During the ongoing virus, which we have no idea when we will get any sort of normality, we must continue to seek God's will and guidance for the future. We must be prepared to listen and to accept the changes that God and the church requires of us.

There is a song in StF which is titled, 'Called by Christ to be disciples' (StF 660 Martin Leckebusch (b. 1962). The 3rd verse is quite relevant to us.

*Hard decisions may confront us,
urging us to compromise ;
still obedience is our watchword —
make us strong and make us wise !
Secular is turned to sacred,
made a precious offering,
as our daily lives are fashioned
in submission to our King.*

To move forward as a circuit and as churches we may well have to make brave decisions about our future. There are many Prophetic voices around us,

and we must listen to what the Spirit is saying. Just like the rally driver listens to the navigator so we must listen to God.

We have just received the new membership tickets for 2020/21 and on them it says, 'The best of all is, God is with us.' They also have a text from Isaiah 43:18-19,

*Do not remember the former things,
or consider the things of old.
I am about to do a new thing;
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness
and rivers in the desert.*

Be reminded of that as we continue to seek God and serve God in and around Lincoln.

May God bless you as you continue to work out your calling as Methodists in Lincolnshire.

Alan



News from our Churches

CENTRAL

Navigation- overcoming our obstacles



As we continue on our journey, still unable to meet together, we are steered and kept on the right course by God's love and care for each of us. He knows our needs, our fears, our sometimes lack of trust, and will enable us to face the need to change course and ride out the storms of life in these changing times.

During these last four months we have learned much about each other as we tell of all we have been able to accomplish, amazed at the strength we have been given to face what we believed was impossible as the lockdown began. Some of us perhaps have drifted off-course but God's hand has guided us back to safety and still waters.

Rev Margaret's continuing contact, her prayers and weekly message through our newsletter has kept us afloat. There are lessons we are still learning, some plain sailing, others when we feel we are running aground. We sail on, receiving God's constant love and care. We are so grateful to Gary Sutton who week by week prepares the newsletter, hoisting the sail, giving us much to keep our minds active. We are grateful to friends too who contribute with interesting news, photographs and messages of celebration.

A reminder that Rev Margaret has registered us to be a collection point for the Shoe Box Appeal. Please let Rev Margaret know if you have any shoe boxes in order for a date and time to be arranged for them to be received at Central.

Our foodbank continues to serve many folk in need; we are grateful to Carolyne and Val who, week by week, carry out this essential work. Rev Margaret and friends are giving much joy by sending prayer shawls together with a comforting message of hope and comfort to friends in many parts of the country.

Have you remembered the story of Pollyanna who every day found something to be glad about? On our return to church Rev Margaret would like us to tell of the many, many things we have found to be glad about.

Our navigation route has taught us through the power of God to ride out the storm of life with a firm trust in his unfailing protection and sail on with his guiding hand to direct and support us on our journey.



NORTH HYKEHAM

North Hykeham like everyone has missed our Sunday church services. We have appreciated on-line, etc, ones of course, and look forward to meeting each other again later this year hopefully!



During lock down Alice Leach has had her 100th birthday and John Kent his 94th. Tom Sykes his 91st and Derek Taylor his 90th 10 July.

Ann Ward has kept our knitters - church folk, Stones Place residents, and friends - knitting strips, Rosemary and Eileen have been busy stitching them together, and Ann has crocheted round them. We have over 65 blankets ready to go to Beverly (the depot that sends them to the Jacobs Well charity).

We have, like most folks, kept in touch with telephone calls. A blessing.

Personally, I am grateful for all the help I have received from friends and count my blessings.

God Bless Barbara

LOCKED

L love
O opportunity
C caring
K kindness
E empathy
D discovery



STONES PLACE

It was not possible to celebrate MHA Sunday on the 2nd Sunday of June in churches, so we are grateful to Mark Thompson for uploading worship resources to the Circuit website, enabling us to join MHA staff in an online act of worship. If you missed it, you can still access it on MHA's website, and follow the links to make a donation. It will not be possible to distribute gift envelopes as in previous years.

Residents at Stones Place have been missing visitors, of course, so we are glad that restrictions have eased to the point where family members have been able to take advantage of the summer weather to book an outdoor visit with a loved one.

The assessment process for new residents has started and 2 new residents have been welcomed following stringent risk assessment and testing.

There have been no Covid deaths at Stones Place, but Chaplain Geoff has conducted funerals of residents who died from other causes.

The crematorium live streams funeral services for the benefit of friends and family who are not immediate relatives of the person who died, and this has resulted in Geoff being approached by members of the public with no connection to Stones Place asking him to conduct other funerals. None of us could have foreseen that this would be a ministry opportunity while we wait for physical contact to be allowed.

In preparation for the resumption of volunteering, volunteers will need to undergo retraining because of social distancing etc. So please contact Emma, Stones Place manager, because the training room will only accommodate 6 at any one time. Tel: 01522 684325

Rae Perkins – MHA rep.



SWALLOWBECK

Swallowbeck have been keeping in touch with one another during the last few months via phone calls and emails. Rev Alan has been sending regular letters and we had a Zoom Church Council meeting in July. Many of us have been tuning into the weekly Zoom Circuit services and we thank all the preachers involved and Mark Thompson for making this possible.

Jackie Isherwood



CHURCHES TOGETHER IN HYKEHAM AND SWALLOWBECK*



It has been a strange few months with no physical contact during Thy Kingdom Come prayer initiative between Ascension Day and Pentecost, no fundraising concert during Christian Aid Week and our regular 10.00-11.00am monthly prayer time on the first Friday of each month taking place at home (or wherever we happened to be at the time). So it has been great this August to have good weather to enable a socially distant prayer hour in Jackie Hunt's garden and to be part of worship led by musicians and pastors of Ignite Church from the bandstand in Boultham Park on 2 Sunday afternoons.

The Circuit has taken part in a week's prayer walk around Lincoln Cathedral each day, with other city churches adopting the remaining weeks between mid-July to mid-September.

The annual children's holiday week was transferred to the digital space of Zoom with 35 children enrolled. Craft materials were delivered to each family beforehand so that whole families could be involved, and these visual aids were much appreciated by the recipients. Many thanks to leaders Colin Draper and Pauline Coulthard and their helpers for all the preparation and presentation involved.

Alan Perkins has recently started to help with fresh food distribution on Wednesday mornings at the Salvation Army Citadel, High Street, Lincoln from 10am. Asda have kindly donated their produce with short best-by dates to distribute to anyone experiencing financial pressures caused by job loss or other difficulties related to Covid 19. Please pass on this information to anyone you know who could make use of some food for immediate consumption.

Rae Perkins

* The Methodist Churches of Hykeham and Swallowbeck, All Saints North Hykeham, St. Hughes North Hykeham, St Michaels South Hykeham, St. George's Church Swallowbeck and Alive Hykeham

WASHINGBOROUGH



Church in the Garden

Methodism began as a movement. People met in groups, in each other's houses, just as the first Christians did in the 1st century. As numbers grew buildings were erected – "chapels", to differentiate between the "church" (the people – the Greek word *ekklesia*, from which we get our word ecclesiastical simply means a gathering of people) and the building (the chapel).

Fast forward to July/August 2020 in a world much transformed. One of the positives to come from this time is that it has given church time to pause and reflect on how we do things. We simply cannot go "back to how things were". The church has not been closed during this time – far from it. Church has been well and truly open for business, caring, working, providing, praying for our communities. But we do miss being "gathered church". A return to the building will take an enormous amount of effort, from comprehensive risk assessment through sanitising and cleaning to limiting the number and movement of people in the building. And so "Church in the Garden" was born. From early July Methodism in Washingborough went back to its roots – meeting in small groups, this time in gardens (with a maximum of 6 people) which can be accessed safely and observing the 2 meter distancing. This is such a wonderful opportunity to meet face to face, catch up, share and worship (however that happens).



We have been delighted at the response and over 40 people are now attending these. Something that has become clear is that what people really miss is relationship – being able to meet with family, friends and church family. We will carry on meeting like this while weather allows. We're following a theme – currently the Old Testament book of the prophet Habbakuk (thank you Ian

Lacey!). It has proved to be very relevant with cries from the prophet to the Lord of, *"how long o Lord, must I call for help?"* There is a sense of frustration that awful things are happening to God's people so why doesn't He bring an end to it. A thought that perhaps many of us have felt. Habbakuk is a short book, only 3 chapters, but one thing we will find out is that, even though we might not always be aware of it, God is always active. He has not abandoned His people. As someone in the group I attended said, "I just know He's with me."

There are two gardens which hold great importance for people of faith. The first is the garden God created and mentioned in Genesis, where human beings walked and talked with God without fear or shame, freely and in harmony. The second is the garden at Gethsemane, where Jesus Christ, God become man, wrestled and prayed as He faced betrayal, torture and death, all to restore the fearless harmony destroyed in the garden of Eden as human beings turned their backs on their Creator God. As we meet in our gardens over the summer we know that the promise of Jesus holds true, "where 2 or 3 are gathered in my name, I am there too." We praise our God that He has placed us in community, whether that is physical or digital (as much of it has been).

The stewards met with Melanie at the start of August to say "goodbye". It turned out to be the hottest day of the year so far and we enjoyed sitting in the garden eating cake and scones with clotted cream. Melanie was presented with a picture of the chapel and the church painted by Canon Rev. Ted Barlow back in 2010. He allowed us to make several prints of it to be sold for the refurbishment. Given that WMC was one of Melanie's first ministerial churches she was delighted with it. She was also presented with a gift token and a cheque for her to spend on whatever takes her fancy! Although her move has been delayed a little we pray it will go well.



"Rev Melanie would like to thank everyone who has sent cards or messages of encouragement.

Thank you for your sharing this part of the journey and until we meet again may God hold you in the palm of his hand"

Melanie



PRAYING TOGETHER

SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER

1 Let us pray for the peace of the world: for statesmen and rulers, that they may have wisdom to know and courage to do what is right.	9 Pray that God will break through the chains that hold us back from spreading the gospel message	17 Pray for those who are affected by storms and flooding: strengthen them in their hour of need, and grant them courage to face the future	25 Pray for the myriad workers who keep our country running eg delivery drivers, refuse collectors, shop workers, postal staff, etc
2 Let us pray for all who work to improve international relationships, that they may find the true way to reconcile people of different race, colour, and creed.	10 Pray for all children, young people, teachers and lecturers as they commence their new academic year	18 Pray for those who are fleeing for their lives. Help us now to open our arms in welcome, and reach out our hands in support. That the desperate may find new hope, and lives torn apart be restored	26 Pray for volunteers, without whom society would grind to a halt
3 Let us pray for men and women the world over, that they may have justice and freedom, and live in security and peace.	11 Pray for us all as we navigate our way through uncharted waters	19 Pray for those who are homeless and cold. Draw near and comfort them in spirit and bless those who work to provide them with shelter, food and friendship	27 Pray for those suffering from mental health issues. Grant them comfort and reassurance
4 Pray for the new President, Reverend Richard Jeremy Teal, and Vice-President, Mrs Carolyn Jayne Lawrence, of the 2020 Methodist Conference.	12 Pray for Rev Bruce Thompson, Chair of District, and other District Officers	20 Pray for Rev Alan Swann that he continues to lead the circuit forward with wisdom and the Holy Spirit	28 Pray for our Ministers as they go about their pastoral business; especially Rev Gyula Fisk, as he gets to know the area he is ministering to
5 Pray that the Lord God will help us show our love to those around us.	13 Pray for those who are facing difficult times. Please protect them from harm and help them build their faith in you.	21 Pray for our emergency services; those who risk their own lives to save others	29 Pray for our administrators that they will be able to work to support the circuit so others are released into mission
6 Pray that God will help you lay down the things that weigh heavily in your life; and help you with the burdens that you must carry, confident that He will share this load with you.	14 Pray that may we discern our Creator God in all that we see, and serve Him in all that we do	22 Pray for our care workers and providers. Give them strength and faith to continue their valuable work. Give thanks for MHA and others.	30 Pray for Circuit Stewards that they will lead and manage the affairs of the circuit with wisdom and integrity
7 Thank God for all the times and seasons held within your life; may He grant you the grace to fulfil the potential He sees in you.	15 Pray for those in hospital; surround the frightened with God's tenderness; give His strength to those in pain; hold the weak in His arms of love, and give hope and patience to those who are recovering	23 Pray for all members who can no longer attend church because of age/poor health. Give them strength, courage and hope.	31 Pray for ourselves that we may see Christ in others, be Christ to others; that we may dwell in Him, and He in us
8 Pray 'For all that has been: thanks. For all that is to come: yes!' (Dag Hammarskjöld)	16 Pray the Lord will strengthen us in our daily living; that in joy and in sorrow we may know the power of His presence to bind together and to heal	24 Pray for all facilitators of community worship: may their calling be blessed with new followers of the faith	

St.Giles

We have continued to meet via Zoom, thanks to John Lawson, every morning to share concerns and pray for each other and for others in our church, community and the wider world.



Recently, a number of our congregation have opened their back gardens for small numbers to meet in fellowship groups and coffee mornings.

The church has been open throughout the lockdown for the Community Larder and a recent initiative has started called "Free4all" where our church hall is full of donations of clothes and household items. Open at the same time as the Larder, items are freely available to anyone in the community.

Our Church Management team meet regularly to discuss church matters and as I write this entry we are meeting to go through the risk assessment with the view to opening the church for worship on Sunday August 23 when we will be projecting the streamed Circuit service. This will be an opportunity for those without internet access to watch the service and also meet in fellowship with other members of the congregation. A Zoom session will be held before hand so that those wishing to stay at home can feel that they are included.

Meanwhile, John Lawson and Cay Sherlock are now both Worship Leaders and Cay is hoping to join the Eden team here on St.Giles. Charlie Watkinson now leads the RoadHOG North team (previously GodPod) and it now tours the estate each Tuesday evening with many young people meeting up.

Regarding the monthly organ recitals at Bailgate Methodist Church, which are usually on the first Thursday each month, due to the uncertainty of when churches will be open again, and the likelihood that people may still be nervous about meeting in groups, we have decided to cancel all recitals for the remainder of this year, and will hopefully be able to start again in March 2021.

Thank you Chris and Christine Matthews

The essentials of navigation

A mariner needed to know:

- which way their ship was heading and how fast
- where it had come from
- where they were intending to go
- how the sea and weather might affect them
- whether any hazards lay ahead

Throughout the voyage, the officers supervised regular observations of speed and heading, noting them down and later transferring the information to a written log, alongside wind direction and other remarks.



Heartbeat of the earth

A poem on an autumn theme

I stood in the depth of the forest
when dawn pauses to draw breath.
This place, where broken dreams
are held and nurtured,
is sacred, holy ground.

Holy ground,
ground of our being,
being in the midst of life's storms
as they rage, and rip
and tear the fragility of life apart.

Here where the scars run deep
and dying leaves caress the ground.

Here where stones hold on to memories
and ancient trees whisper their testimonies,

Here where the dew drops kiss the well-spring of life,
and transcendence rises in the ancient yearnings of the earth,

Here the song dancer takes the faltering first steps,
All is well and all shall be well.

Clare McBeath



A short drama

I will give you rest

The **reporter** could be holding a microphone or a notebook and should sound very excited to begin with, becoming increasingly confused as the interview doesn't go to plan.

God should be very relaxed and calm throughout.

Reporter: Good morning, I'm here today, on the sixth day of creation, for an exclusive interview... with God himself! God, good morning.

God: Good morning.

Reporter: First of all, congratulations on creation so far, the heavens, the oceans, the trees, the aardvark, you must be very pleased.

God: Well yes, I don't like to blow my own trumpet but it does all look very good to me.

Reporter: Everyone is desperate to know what's next on your agenda. There's talk of unicorns, dragons, calorie-free chocolate? Can you give us any clues as to what happens next?

God: Certainly, Skegness!

Reporter: Ummm, I'm sorry God, but I think Skegness was created on day three when you separated the land from the sea, wasn't it?

God: Oh I'm not creating it, I'm visiting it. It's time for a short holiday.

Reporter: I'm sorry? What about creation?

God: It's done. Everything's in place, and now I'm going to rest.

Reporter: But you're God. You don't need to rest; surely there must be something else that needs creating? What about sliced bread?

God: There's always something else that needs doing. If I followed that logic I'd never rest at all. Anyway, I've created people, they'll get to sliced bread eventually.

Reporter: But you could make things better, make more of it, aren't you worried that people will accuse you of being lazy?

God: I'm hoping they'll follow my example. Creation is already very good, I've done my work and now it's time to rest – that's always been my pattern. > **Looks at reporter in a concerned way.** What about you? You're looking a bit peaky – need to take a break?

Reporter: Erm, erm well, you know, work's been a bit,

The Rumour

(Keep this philosophy in mind the next time you hear - or are out to repeat - a rumour. I feel this could have an impact on many of your readers!)

In ancient Greece (469 - 399 BC), Socrates was widely lauded for his wisdom. One day the great philosopher came upon an acquaintance, who ran up to him excitedly and said, "Socrates, do you know what I just heard about one of your students?" "Wait a moment," Socrates replied. "Before you tell me, I'd like you to pass a little test. It's called the Test of Three. Before you talk to me about my student let's take a moment to test what you're going to say.

The first test is Truth. Have you made absolutely sure that what you are about to tell me is true?" "No," the man replied, "actually I just heard about it." "All right," said Socrates. "So you don't really know if it's true or not. Now let's try the second test, the test of goodness. Is what you are about to tell me about my student something good?" "No, on the contrary," was the reply. "So", Socrates continued, "you want to tell me something bad about him even though you're not certain it's true?" The man shrugged, a little embarrassed. Socrates continued, "You may still pass though because there is a third test - the filter of usefulness. Is what you want to tell me about my student going to be useful to me?" The man hesitated and said, "No, not really..."

"Well," concluded Socrates, "if what you want to tell me is neither True nor Good, nor even Useful, why tell it to me at all?" The man was defeated and ashamed and said no more. This is the reason Socrates was a great philosopher and held in such high esteem.



A prayer for others

O God, so often we want to pray for others but don't know how. We can't remember names or numbers, or other issues weigh heavily on our hearts. Thank goodness, God, that you know what we mean when we pray. So, we bring in this moment, those names and faces, images and desires for others that pop in and out of our minds throughout the day...

the old lady at the bus stop...

the young mum at the checkout...

the chap up the road who's calling for his dog...

the teachers struggling with their class...

a young family who can't make ends meet...

those without work, who can't find new jobs...

those with mental health issues and seeking help...

those who know they need help for whatever reason, but are too ashamed to ask, or are ignored...

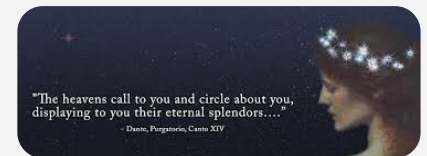
O God, for all these people and countless others, we offer our prayers. We know you do not need reminding, but you do need willing workers – even us – to help them know your love and have their needs met.

Hear our ramblings, O God. Amen.

A personal prayer

I simply pray that you, Lord God, will help me show your love to those around me. Amen.

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Compiling each Circuit News is a big but exciting job. It is really important that we celebrate all the good that is happening in the Circuit and would like feedback on our newsletter. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact us; we welcome your thoughts. Please address to [in-fo@lincolnmethodist.org.uk](mailto:info@lincolnmethodist.org.uk)

Material for the **December 2020** edition of **Circuit News** must be with the Circuit Office by Friday, 13 November 2020. Any material received after this date will not be included in the December edition.

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