



Extraordinary Times

Derby Methodists Newsletter

Summer 2019



Welcome to the Summer edition of the Circuit Newsletter in which you will be introduced to two new members of staff joining the Circuit in September, Revd Gill Sharp and Revd David Owen. David's testimony is gripping, but a bit lengthy for one newsletter, so I have agreed with him that we will split it into two, with the second half to be included next time. I'll leave you wanting more! We begin with a spotlight on all things messy.....

Messy Church 2019

Messy Church continues to thrive in the Circuit with events happening at several churches. Most Messy Churches are outside of Sunday services with one being held at the same time as the ordinary Sunday service. Each church chooses when to hold a Messy Church Service knowing the area and people they serve. Some are held after school and others are held on a Saturday morning. Messy Church is held once a month and usually has a meal attached to it.

To produce a Messy Church event takes a lot of work and time commitment from many people. The leaders split into specific groups with none of it happening without the help of each other, it is truly a joint effort. Meticulous planning takes place before hand with ideas being passed back and forth. The people attending Messy Church are introduced to the theme for the day. A short service of celebration introducing the theme for the day usually takes place and then, depending on what's been arranged, they split into activity groups. Activities vary but usually include things to make to take home and the ever popular colouring.

At the end of the event a meal is shared with more time for fellowship and getting to know each other.

If you would like to attend a Messy Church Event or give your time to help then please go to our web site or get in touch with the churches that currently run a Messy Church. They are: Duffield, Draycott, Littleover, Mickleover and Oakwood.

*I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.
Psalm 40 v 8*

The Church on Oakwood

Messy Church has been taking place at The Church on Oakwood for a number of years now. Messy Church is for everyone! Whether you are old or young, you are always invited and welcome to attend.



Every Messy Church runs differently. Even our Messy Church has changed in the last couple of years with changes in its leadership and through developing new ideas. Our Messy Church runs monthly, on the 3rd Saturday of every month from 11am-1pm with games, themed crafts and a competition for the first hour. We then come together for the service part and end the session with a sit-down meal of a jacket potato with fillings - this is offered to everyone!



Messy Church has become a great outreach tool for us, to share the gospel and connect more often with families from 'Walkers & Talkers' (our Wednesday toddler group), holiday club and activity days. It is a privilege to meet wider families of the connected children. One child who has been attending Walkers & Talkers for years, attends Messy Church regularly bringing along her mum, dad, older brother and teenage

sister. It is also key to note that a number of people who attend the Sunday morning service either come regularly to Messy Church, as helpers, or occasionally throughout the year, just to be a part of what goes on. This makes such a difference and so lovely to see people coming together. There is nothing better than watching a child showing an adult how to operate technology or an adult teaching a child how to play chess!

To integrate Messy Church families more with the rest of the congregation on a Sunday - in July we will be piloting 'Messy Church Sunday' on the 3rd Sunday of the month (day after Messy Church) and inviting families into the service to continue our Messy Church celebration. This is brand new for us and something we are stepping out in faith and trying. Sunday, same as Saturday, isn't a day that will suit everyone, we are aware of that, but we are praying for more opportunities to offer an invitation and for the gospel to be shared and ultimately for people (of all ages) to know and take hold of how much they are genuinely loved and treasured by the God who created them and wants a relationship with them.

A Messy Church invitation is shared in our local schools through our 'Open the Book' team during their weekly assemblies - a number of families have attended Messy Church in the last couple of years, just by this alone.

If you are considering starting up a Messy Church – take that leap of faith! The blessings we have had, through the people who have and continue to attend, are endless. Where God guides, he will provide.... and we are a witness to that!



Messy Baptism at Littleover Methodist Church

Messy Church recently celebrated its first Messy Baptism. Grace is 12 years old and one of the young leaders on the team. Grace decided that instead of being baptised in a Sunday service she would like to celebrate her baptism with the Messy Church congregation that she has a heart to serve and share her faith with.

Grace has been a young leader at Messy Church for 18 months and wanted to be witness to the 120 people who come along each month. In her testimony Grace said, *"I like to tell other people about how much Jesus loves them and how He wants to be their friend and will always be there for them".* She also spoke about how important Messy Church is to her, *"I know that part of being a member of the church is finding what gifts God has given me and how I should use them to serve Him. One of the ways in which I serve is being part of the Messy Church team. I go to the planning meetings, I prepare activities, I run an activity and recently I have been helping out in the celebration at the end just before we share food together."*

Messy Church that day focused all the morning's activities around the theme of baptism. Families took part in many different activities that explored the Baptism of Jesus and the promises God has for those who love Him. In the celebration time we thought about how baptism is a sign of being washed clean and making a fresh start with God. Grace shared a very powerful testimony and spoke of how her faith is lived out at school. She said, *"I can be quite a shy person at times, but Jesus has helped me by growing more confident, especially in RE lessons where we have been learning about the Easter story. I have been teaching my classmates and my RE teacher a little bit about Christianity".* After a time of worship and prayer we finished the morning with a celebration meal and lots of cake.



This was an incredibly special morning, not just for Grace, but for the whole team and all the people who come along each month. One father, who has been coming to Messy Church for six months now, said *“I’m not a religious person, but when Grace went into the water, I found myself moved to tears and felt something stirring in my heart. I found this quite a spiritual experience”*.

Messy Church is having an incredible impact on the lives of many people. God is at work transforming hearts through the creativity, hospitality and love of those who serve on Messy Church teams. The Holy Spirit is moving in the lives of the families who attend Messy Church. We hope to see more people baptised at Messy Church and pray for God’s continued blessing on all the Messy Church’s taking place in our District.

Thanks to Judith Neal, Becky Tomlinson and Jackie Berry for their articles

Welcome to Revd Gill Sharp



I have just returned from Cliff College Festival, renewed and revitalised by the worship celebrations, the bible teaching and the testimonies shared by ex-students of Cliff College. I believe these elements of worshipping God, studying His word and sharing how we see Him working in our daily lives are essential for us all as followers of Jesus Christ. Through the testimony shared on the first evening of Cliff Festival God re-affirmed His call on my life to preach the good news, to journey with those in

difficult circumstances and to offer healing and wholeness to all through the power of the Holy Spirit.

I am very much looking forward to serving God in the Derby Circuit from September 2019 at Mickleover and Dean Street churches as together we seek to build each other up in the Christian faith and seek to share the good news of Jesus in the community. I will also be serving as a member of the Chaplaincy team at the University of Derby and I am excited by the potential opportunities this role presents.

My husband Phil is also looking forward to moving to Derby as his daily commute to Stoke-on-Trent will be significantly reduced! Also moving with us is our chocolate Labrador Benjie, who loves everybody but can be a little over enthusiastic at times – you have been warned! Phil and I have 3 children who are in their 20s. Our two daughters are married; we are moving nearer to Louise who is in Nottingham and leaving Naomi behind in Bolton. Our son Matthew is currently working in New Zealand, and enjoying seeing as much of the country as he can while there.

God bless
Gill

Welcome to Revd David Owen

I very much look forward to returning to Circuit ministry in the Derby Circuit (*Allestree, Duffield & St John's*) in September.

I was born in East London, South Africa to a British father and a French Huguenot and British descendant mother, and baptised at St Andrews Presbyterian Church in 1958. My parents began my real Christian nurture in the first multi-racial Presbyterian Church in South Africa, which we joined when I was four years old, because they, together with their minister, the Revd Robbie Robertson, could not reconcile segregated worship with the message of Jesus. When we moved to Kimberley when I was 12, they found another kindred spirit in the Methodist Minister, the Revd Sydney Friedland, and so we as a family became Methodists.



I attended a very mediocre state boarding school but had the privilege of coming under the influence of the Revd Canon George Pressley, my English master, who was frequently locked up because of his anti-apartheid activities. Together with the support of the school Chaplain, I 'converted' to the Anglican Church and felt called to ordination (and possibly the monastic life) in my penultimate year at school. I came under pressure to read law, and so did so for a year, but was more influenced by a sojourn in the Community of the Resurrection (CR), the onetime home of Trevor Huddleston, which confirmed my desire to begin the path to ordination. I moved to the University of Natal, during which time I was accepted as an Anglican ordinand. The bishop told me to complete my degree and then do compulsory military service first, and then return for further vocational advice. I found this a bit strange and disappointing, because I was hoping for some advice as to how, as a

Christian, I could deal with the crisis of conscience military service under an apartheid government, presented!

A very effective way of deferring national service was to be a registered full-time student. I had met Trish at an Anglican / Methodist youth group, and we had decided to get married. Trish is a cradle Methodist raised in a family where all people were accepted without reservation and so experienced much of Asian African as well as the traditional Zulu culture of Natal. Her Father was a fluent Zulu speaker and was much loved by these people.

On graduating, I explored the possibility of a vocation as a teacher before ordination, as I saw the importance of education in the liberation of the people. In addition, if I trained as a teacher, I was offered a bursary which was just enough for us to live on, and so I completed a diploma in education specialising in History, Biblical Studies and Religious Education. I was then invited to do a postgraduate history degree, which meant deferring military service for yet another year. By now, Trish had qualified as a teacher and was able to support us, even though, as a married woman, she was never allowed to hold a permanent position and earned significantly less than any male teacher with the same qualification!

On completion of this degree, I planned to continue with further post-graduate work, but was refused deferment and landed up in the training unit for officers in the Military Intelligence Corps. After some abuse during basic, second and third phase military training, I refused a commission and was eventually allowed to work as a social worker in a poverty stricken Griqua and so-called 'Coloured' community, as a non-combatant. While here I was licensed as a sub-deacon in the Anglican church and began to preach reasonably regularly. On completion of National Service, I returned to the Church for vocational advice, but found my ministry fulfilling as a school teacher and lay minister in the Church, and so was happy to wait. However, I became increasingly uncomfortable as history teacher especially teaching exam classes, because of the pro-apartheid propaganda that was so central to the syllabus. As a result, I left teaching and worked with an archaeologist researching Zulu history on a contract. I briefly returned to my alma mater teaching RE and non-examined History, until I was invited to be head of the History division of a research institute associated to Rhodes University in Grahamstown. My new employers encouraged me to publish my misgivings about the schools' history syllabuses, and to do research into the Xhosa leadership in the region from the late Iron Age to the release of Nelson Mandela (leading to two minor volumes). While doing this, I also worked on a thesis on Methodist and Anglican mission history and theology (eventually graduating with a Master of Theology degree) and felt drawn back into the Methodist fold.
To be continued.....

The Circuit service to **welcome** Revds David and Gill will take place at Mickleover M C on Saturday 31 August at 7.00pm.

And of course we must not forget to say **farewell** to Revd K K Yap who has been Minister to the Chinese Congregation in Derby since 2009. There is a Circuit service at Ashbourne Rd Church on Sunday 7 July at 6.15pm. We wish Revd KK and his family all the very best for the future and God's blessing on a very happy retirement.

All We Can has recently been short-listed for this year's Charity Awards in the Grant making and Funding category. AWC has been recognised for showing best practice in leadership and management, which may be helpful as a guide to other organisations. Winners of the 10 categories under consideration will be announced at a ceremony in the grounds of the Tower of London, hosted by Rev. Richard Coles on June 5th. We await events.

The most recent Appeal, jointly with The Methodist Church, is for those affected by Cyclone Idai in Mozambique, Malawi, and Zimbabwe. Winds of up to 106mph, and heavy rains, causing widespread floods have resulted in vast areas of devastation. Recently planted crops have been washed away, together with the promise of harvest, which has removed the livelihoods of poor rural families. The destruction of homes and infrastructure has caused many thousands of people to be displaced. Initially, AWC worked with partners and church contacts in Malawi, providing humanitarian aid, but has recently extended help to Mozambique. After responding to immediate need, AWC also helps with long term planning for a more sustainable future for communities.

This year the Harvest Appeal theme for AWC is 'Deepen their Roots' – a reference to the provision and growing of potatoes in some of the poorest communities in Ethiopia. A DVD of resources, including a short film, posters, and gift envelopes are available now from allwecan.org.uk/harvest. I have a few resources on request. A speaker from AWC can also be arranged for a Harvest Appeal Event. At the next District Representatives Synod on September 21st, Tim Baker from the AWC Team at Headquarters will be a speaker, in recognition of the recent 80th Anniversary of All We Can.

Knitting Project Report June 2019

As we have adopted Methodist Homes for the Aged (MHA) as the charity we support with our knitting, I thought the following items of good news about MHA may be of interest. In April, the independent 'Your Care Rating' survey showed that MHA homes scored highly for levels of satisfaction of care

among the residents. Four homes scored 980 out of 1,000, as the residents rated highly the care they received.

In a recent BBC 1 documentary on the effect music can have on people with dementia, MHA Care Home resident, with advanced dementia, Eileen Pegg, was featured. Eileen was having a one-to-one music therapy session, and her response to the music was wonderful to see. These sessions, and group sessions are provided free of charge, and are funded by charitable donations. Each one-to-one session costs £30, and music can make a difference to people in most stages of dementia. In our circuit, Richard Dodson regularly provides music for services, and other occasions at Willowcroft MHA . Barbara Sims has been distributing our knitted goods to MHA Willowcroft (Spondon), MHA Queenswood (Ripley), and at HQ Stuart Street, Derby. Barbara has received several enthusiastic letters of thanks from the homes, and wishes to pass on the appreciation of the residents to all our knitters.

Please deliver items direct to MHA HQ at Stuart Street, rather than Mickleover M C, if at all possible as Barbara is temporarily out of action.

I have had a request to see if we could send knitted goods to an overseas charity, in replacement of Aquabox, but have had no success at the moment with a local Refugee Agency – any suggestions or comments welcome.

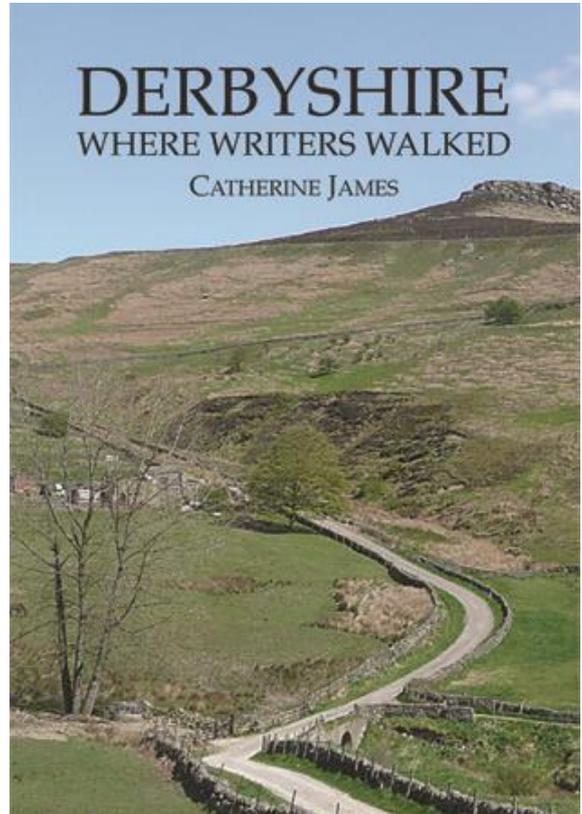
Many thanks to all our knitters for all your faithfulness, despite some of the uncertainties we have experienced recently.

Dorothy Robinson



With the author's permission, the following excerpt is reproduced from Catherine James' book entitled 'Derbyshire Where Writers Walked'. Please read and enjoy the freebie, if you would like more you can purchase a copy locally in Waterstones & Derby Tourist Information Office in the Market Place.

Derbyshire is not Dorset.
There is no Thomas Hardy to conjure up the villages, and villagers, of Wessex. No sisters have wandered its moors. Beside the Derwent, no Bard has sung the love song of Juliet. Yet writers have travelled through the County. Their books record memories of its mills and stone-hewn towns and rugged landscapes. Some have paused. And the impressions they formed during their visits can be traced in descriptions of characters and places. Others have lingered. They have put down roots. Their writings have often been a distillation of ideas and views developed over the months, or even the years, they spent in Derbyshire.....



The purpose, then, of this book is not to be a biography. Rather it is to serve as a companion-guide which can point the way to places which have inspired writers to tell the stories of Derbyshire. It is as much to do with the places as with those who have written about them. The visitors of today are invited to search for the buildings and landscapes found in the pages of literature, to linger, to be a detective and find the evidence for themselves. For so much is waiting to be discovered in the hills of Derbyshire.

Articles for the next Newsletter should reach Angela by
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