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Sept 2014
Number 6

Sankey valley

COMMUNICATING NEWS ACROSS OUR SANKEY VALLEY
METHODIST CIRCUIT.

WELCOME! to this latest issue of our Circuit Newsletter. This month we are also saying Welcome to our new District Chair, The Revd Dr Sheryl Anderson, who had her District Welcome Service at Linacre Mission on Saturday 30th August. See the details on p8 of this issue for the Circuit Service of Welcome for Sheryl.

In this issue we have a focus on our Discipleship in the Circuit, and we report on some of the things that have been going on over the Summer.

If you have news for the next issue please make sure it is with the Editors (Jackie B, Mark C, Stephen F & John H) about a month before the next Circuit meeting.



The Sankey Valley Circuit is online!

Visit our website:

www.sankeyvalleymethodists.org.uk

and look for us on 

CONGRATULATIONS!!

We are thrilled to announce two major Good News Headlines in this issue. First of all we have been celebrating the inauguration of "the Newest Church in Methodism" - New Song Network, and secondly the Outstanding Ofsted report on Nutgrove Primary School. Congratulations to both teams!



SEE OVERLEAF FOR OUR NEW SONG REPORT

OUTSTANDING IN ALL AREAS

Nutgrove Methodist Aided Primary School's Headteacher, Mr Ian Rimmer, was delighted to inform the Circuit that Ofsted had awarded his school the top grades in all aspects of its work. As the report quotes on its front page:

"The headteacher is the driving force in ensuring a high standard of education. He ensures that the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of learning permeate throughout the whole-school community. The school motto, 'My Best, Always, Everywhere' underpins all the school's values."

Mr Rimmer would be the first to acknowledge that such a result comes from the efforts of not just him but all his team - his staff colleagues, the support staff and of course the pupils' own efforts. Well done to everybody!

You can read the full Ofsted Report via the school's website:

<http://www.nutgroveprimary.co.uk>

Mr Ian Rimmer, Headteacher, Nutgrove Methodist Aided Primary School
Govett Road, St Helens, Merseyside, St Helens, WA9 5NH.
School e-mail: nutgrove@sthelens.org.uk, Tel: 01744 678400

METHODISM'S NEWEST CHURCH OPENS IN WARRINGTON

First Steps In 2009 an idea was born: to meet for worship once a month, prior to moving into a coffee shop to establish a new church congregation, as part of the ministry of Fresh Expressions of church and reaching our local community with the good news of Jesus. The first session was to meet in the coffee shop at Bold Street Methodist Mission. About 20 people were expected to attend but that night 65 people turned up, and New Song Café was born. 5 years on and Café is still in Bold Street with 150+ people meeting monthly for worship and praise.

It would have been easy to see that as success and to do nothing more but that is not what happened: the growing sense of community created other activities and developed into New Song Network.

New Song Breakfast is a monthly Sunday morning act of worship at Latchford Methodist Church for all ages with worship, drama, discussion and bacon or sausage butties while Discipleship also meets monthly on a Sunday evening for study, worship and prayer. Home groups and Bible Study have grown; the latter taking place at Station Coffee, Latchford.

The Community Action Team carries out jobs such as painting and gardening where needed and on Mothering Sunday, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day if you visit Walton Lea Crematorium or Fox Covert Cemetery you will find a welcome from NSN with hot drinks, cakes and someone who will have the time to listen to you.

All this and more, and people were asking about becoming a 'member' of NSN. Some were people new to church, others were returning to church, some had responsibilities at their local church and NSN was providing a place where

they could 'just be' and worship without any additional duties and some were struggling at their local church and found what they had been searching for at NSN. So on 22nd June 2014 New Song Network became the newest church in British Methodism at a service at Bold Street Mission.



The commissioning of the church and its minister, the Revd Jackie Bellfield, was led by the Revd Lucille Rogers. Also taking part were the Rev Jim Booth, then Chair of the Liverpool District, and the Revd Steve Lindridge, Methodist Connexional Missioner and FEAST co-ordinator. It was a great celebration with 43 people being made members. Local and national media were present recording the service and interviews with individuals.

Look out for Songs of Praise on 21st September!

And we are still not saying "That's it; done!" Our mission statement as a church is 'Loving God, Loving People' and we are committed to continue exploring and living out the gospel message of Jesus and to providing a quality worship experience where people can meet with God, learn more about Him, and encounter His love. We believe something wonderful is happening within this new community – God is moving, lives are being transformed, people are joining New Song. This fills us with a great sense of anticipation and excitement for the future and what God has in store for us.

Kit Heald and Rev Jackie Bellfield

New Song Network is highlighted on the Methodist Church website. There are two ways to find the page: Go to www.methodist.org.uk and type 'New Song Network' in the Search Box, then select 'Methodism in Numbers', or use this 'bookmark' URL which has been made to take you there directly: <http://tinyurl.com/l5dk6lk>

Praying Around The Circuit: September to November 2014

Antrobus 7th September We give thanks to God for the privilege of our village life in Antrobus. We look back on summer with thanksgiving for holidays and enjoyment for those who have had breaks. We also think of the non-stop hard work for the farming community, particularly during the summer months and into autumn. Please pray with us as we look forward to celebrating traditional harvest when all is truly gathered in. Please pray for our continuing links with the Community Shop, Village Hall, the ecumenical work with St Marks and their 'raise the roof' project, our links with the school and friends across the village. We welcome Mark back from his sabbatical and pray that we can re-engage our all-age services as we start the new term. Minister: **Revd Mark Coles**

Ashton 14th September We give thanks for our newly opened weekly coffee bar. We continue to support the Foodbank and pray for those who administer it and receive from it. Please pray for our Songs of Praise service tomorrow evening as part of the Ashton Festival and for our Churches Together leaders exploring the possibility of starting Street Pastors in the town. Please also pray for our 'Talking of God' course to be shared with our friends from Heath Street. We give special thanks and prayers for our ministers **Revd Lucille and Deacon Angela.**

Bold Street 21st September Dear Lord, we pray for the work at Bold St, especially the outreach work in the coffee shop and 'Tea and Toast' as they reach out to people who are lonely, homeless and isolated. We pray for our minister **Revd Jackie Bellfield** and all those who serve in this town centre mission.

Burtonwood 28th September We give thanks for the Ecumenical friendship the three churches in Burtonwood have with each other. We also pray for our Sunday School children and their teachers, may they continue to grow. Please pray for our minister Sue during her sabbatical. Minister: **Revd Sue Smith**

Cronton 5th October A small but welcoming congregation who enjoy fellowship together. They reach out to the local community through the hire of their premises including collecting for Widnes Foodbank and they enjoy ecumenical relationships with Cronton Anglican Mission. May God's vision be upon them all. Minister: **Revd Jenny MacGregor**

Cross Lane United 12th October Pray for Cross Lane United for God's blessings on our worship, fellowship and mission outreach. Let us never lose sight of the Great Commission God has given that we are to bring the Gospel to all. Pray that the youth in our church will stand strong for Christ in their schools and with their friends. We ask God to help each young person to follow Christ's plan for their lives, both now and in the years to come. Minister: **Deacon Angela Shereni**

Farnworth 19th October A welcoming family church who love to share in worship and fellowship together. Please pray for continued outreach into the community as they support many charities including Widnes Street Pastors and Foodbank. We rejoice as one of our members trains to become a Street Pastor. May God's vision be upon them all. Minister: **Revd Jenny MacGregor**

Heath Street 26th October We give thanks for our Harvest celebration last week and for the participation of our Junior Church. Please pray for our Baptism service today, for our Young Carers group and for our housebound members. Please also pray for our 'Talking of God' course as we seek to grow in confidence in the Gospel and sharing our faith with others. Ministers: **Revd Lucille Rogers and Deacon Angela Shereni.**

Hood Manor 2nd November We give thanks to God that we are celebrating our 36th Anniversary this weekend, and ask that He will continue to bless our outreach to the community through Spindles, Tuesday's Tea and Tots and the Foodbank. Please pray for the development of the new coffee shop which we are hoping to open. Please pray for our minister Sue during her sabbatical. Minister: **Revd Sue Smith**

Latchford 9th November New relationships with a local nursery are blossoming and we are thankful for this. We pray for our links with the High School, the new headteacher Mrs Bev Scott Heron and the fruitfulness of Jackie's work there as Governor. Thankful for Lyons Court, we look for further ways of engaging missionally and pray for the new Bible study and chat groups which will begin there. As we Celebrate our 120th year we pray and seek God's wisdom and vision for how we can be relevant to the context around us. Minister: **Revd Jackie Bellfield**

Lymm 16th November We pray today for all the families and individuals connected to the church through baptisms, weddings and funerals, and from contact through hall bookings. We give God thanks for the growth of contemporary styles of worship, especially for the way these have encouraged new members to attend. We continue to pray for volunteers to help with church tasks, and look ahead expectantly to new directions of church growth. Minister: **Revd Stephen Froggatt**

New Song Network 23rd November Praise God for his love and grace as we have become the newest church in Methodism and we are grateful for the very positive affirmation from the wider connexion. As we develop our mission and ministry we seek God's blessing and guidance that all we do would reflect God in our communities and relationships. We thank God for the many opportunities of sharing the good news of Jesus as we speak of the new song story and ask that we would continually find ways of relating to the world around us. Minister: **Revd Jackie Bellfield**

Nutgrove 30th November Please pray for the Members of Nutgrove Church as we seek to alter the church to hopefully bring in children and their families from the school, the nursery and the wider community. We are hoping to get the windows changed and remove five rows of pews in the Church, replacing with chairs so that we can have a usable space to offer to families and friends in the wider community. We have been fundraising for a while at church and with the help of our Minister Martin and the Circuit Leadership team and with the blessing of the Circuit Meeting our goals are becoming that much clearer. Think of us in your prayers as we strive to move forward. Minister: **Revd Martin Wood**



on Discipleship

The Mission of the Sankey Valley

Methodist Circuit is to make and nurture disciples of Jesus Christ and explore the Kingdom of God. In the coming year we will be running several different groups and courses to offer opportunities for us all to be nurtured as Christ's disciples, explore the Kingdom of God and grow in confidence in making new disciples.

Details of some of these opportunities are below.

Please prayerfully consider taking up an opportunity to be part of one of these groups.

Talking of God (Rev Lucille Rogers)

A course designed to help us grow in confidence in talking of God wherever we are

Monthly on Thursday evenings 7.30-9pm
At Heath St Methodist Church, Golborne

11th September: Starting the conversation

- We all have a story to tell

9th October: Conversation stoppers

- Conversations can be hard

13th November: Conversations in context

- How our world can frame our conversations

11th December: Living the conversations

- Conversations are more than just words

Time to pray, listen, share ideas, explore the Bible and grow in confidence as disciples of Jesus.

New Song Network Disciple evenings

(Rev Jackie Bellfield and others)

We share in new songs, prayer and discussion time and of course, coffee and cake are served!

Held on the second Sunday of each month at Latchford Methodist Church Hall, 6.30 p.m. until 7.45 p.m

We look at a wide range of topics, based on discussion and requests from the group, as well as current issues and relevant material as we go through the year. In July, we looked at 'God of Laughter' and had some wonderful discussion on the appropriateness of laughter within worship. Our discussion was based around the following scripture:

Proverbs 15:13, 15; 17:22 A happy heart shows itself in a cheerful expression whereas heartfelt sorrow breaks the spirit. Though the life of the poor is hard, those who are happy at heart will forever feast. There is no finer medicine than a merry heart; a miserable disposition, by contrast, shrivels the bones.

In August we looked at the prophet and book of Zephaniah which lead on to a discussion about our own time of worship and whether we find the time to be quiet in God's presence in between our Sunday worship. Following this discussion we have decided to focus September's Discipleship on options and opportunities for our own devotions and we will be looking at what's available on-line as well as have some material to share views on resources from the bookshop in St Helen's which is taking over at Bold Street.

Our Disciple session in October will be led by Rev Lucille Rogers, when we will be exploring the book of Amos, and in November we will be led by Rev Kath Williamson from St Lawrence's in Frodsham.



Discipleship Questions

(Rev Jenny McGregor)

Freedom to ask and question – listening to God and each other

Monday Meetings
at the Widnes Manse
38 Fairfield Road WA8 6SG.

1.30-2.45pm

1st and 3rd Monday in the Month

Discipleship Preaching

(Minister and Local Preachers)

We hope that local preachers and ministers who are preaching on the following Sundays in the Circuit will take up the theme of discipleship in their services and sermons.

Sep 21
Jan 25

Oct 26
May 3

Nov 2
Aug 23

Kingdom of God Meetings

(Rev Martin Wood)

Have you noticed that the Church is in a period of transition that has been going on for about 150 years or so? An older style of conventional Christianity that is semi-literalistic and quite doctrinal has become for many people, unpersuasive and unconvincing. This transition has raised many questions in some people's minds, such as:

- Can I say the Christian creeds with complete honesty?
- Can I take the bible seriously, but not literally?
- If Christianity is not primarily about an afterlife, then what is it about?
- If God is not a supernatural, interventionist God, what then is prayer about?

If you have ever asked yourself these or similar questions, and wished you could talk about them openly, then the Kingdom of God group may be of interest to you.

We meet once a month on Saturdays at 12:30 in the Wesley room at Nutgrove School. Light refreshments are available and the meeting begins at 13:00.

We are currently discussing a book by Brian D McLaren entitled "A New Kind of Christian" but we will have completed that shortly. A new topic for discussion is likely to centre around a video entitled "Painting the Stars," exploring the relationship between science and faith and an evolutionary spirituality. The title is taken from a quote by the artist Vincent Van Gogh who is reported to have said, "When I have a terrible need of - dare I say, religion? - then I go outside at night and paint the stars."

Dates of future meetings are shown below:

2014:	18 Oct, 22 Nov, 13 Dec.
2015:	10 Jan, 7 Feb, 21 Mar, 18 Apr, 16 May, 13 Jun 11 Jul, 22 Aug, 19 Sep

PAINTING THE STARS

Science, Religion and an Evolving Faith

Homegroups in Lymm & Woolston

(Rev Stephen Froggatt and local leaders)

There is a selection of groups in and around Lymm as part of Lymm Methodist Church's Discipleship project.

Schedules vary - please see below:

- 1. Thursday night group** (usually alternate weeks) reflecting on the 'New Testament for Everyone' series by Tom Wright. Based in homes on rotation - contact Graham Pegg 01925 756730
 - 2. Tuesday night group** (meeting frequency varies, occasionally meeting on Wednesday!) and currently reflecting on 'The origin and meaning of the Creed.' Contact Victoria Sims 01925 756858
 - 3. Wednesday night group** (monthly). Reflection on specific Bible passages - How does it help us understand what is going on in the world today? All ages welcome but particularly suitable for 30s and 40s, and new Christians. Contact David Slack 01925 753213
 - 4. Lent and Advent** (weekly in season) usually using the latest material from York Courses. At Woolston, these courses are home-based. Contact Eric Andrews 01925 818548
- At Lymm the sessions are presented three times each week: Tuesday morning (home-based), Wednesday afternoon (at The Coffee House, Eagle Brow) and Thursday evening (at the Lymm Manse). Contact Graham Pegg 01925 756730

Letter Writing (Rev Martin Wood)

Further details on application



Perhaps a part of your desire to focus on your own discipleship journey is to find out more about the work of Amnesty International and other groups campaigning for basic human rights around the world. Could your discipleship involve Christ-like working to protect men, women and children wherever justice, freedom, truth and dignity are denied?

Even a simple act of writing a letter, sending an email or signing a petition, whether in protest at human rights abuses, or in solidarity with political prisoners, can make a big difference.

If interested, please contact Rev Martin Wood martin2w@btconnect.com for details.

CIRCUIT NEWS ROUND-UP



The Methodist Church Safeguarding Past Cases Review

As part of the commitment of the Methodist Church to creating safer spaces the Conference agreed to undertake a Past Cases Review across the Connexion. The remit of the Review is to look at any safeguarding cases connected to the Methodist Church over the last 60 years, involving children and/or vulnerable adults.

The Review has two main aims. First, to take any action that may still be necessary to ensure that children or vulnerable adults are protected in particular situations that are brought to the attention of the review team, and second, to ensure that learning from past cases is embedded in good practice across the Church in the future.

The perspective of lay people within the Church is crucial. Lay people often carry information in churches that may not be passed on to ministers, particularly in the past when the importance of recording information was not as well understood as it is now. It is vitally important that anyone who has experienced abuse within the Church context has the opportunity to tell their story to the Review.

Details of how to participate in the Review and the form to be completed are on the Methodist Church website www.methodist.org.uk. If you are not able to use the internet, response forms are available from the Connexional Safeguarding team by ringing 0207 467 5125 and speaking to the Past Cases Review Administrator.

If you would like support with any aspect of this please speak to your minister or your District Safeguarding Officer, Ann Taylor 07817 821120.

All contributions to the review need to be received by 24th December 2014.

Circuit Assessment 2014/15

Each Church is required by Methodist Standing Orders to contribute to the costs of running the Circuit, i.e. funding the costs of paying and housing our ministers (£340,000), meeting a share of Connexional & District costs (£103,000), and funding the costs of running the Circuit (£62,000). After allowing for income, the amount to be raised for 2014/15 was £457,000.

The Circuit Meeting decided at its February 2014 meeting by a balloted vote of 41:17 to remain with a factor system (see below) rather than moving to an offer system, i.e. where each Church Council offers the amount it feels it can afford to pay. The assessment contributions for 2014/15 were then agreed at the June 2014 Circuit Meeting and were based on four equally weighted factors:

- a) 25% on Membership as at 1 November 2013 per Stats for Mission.
- b) 25% on average Adult Attendance over 10 week period in Autumn 2013.
- c) 25% on Offerings / Gift Aid as per each church's 2012/13 accounts.
- d) 25% on Other Income including lettings as per each church's 2012/13 accounts.

There were several agreed exclusions from a Church's assessed income and these included Income in respect of Property Schemes approved by Circuit/District under the Property Consents process, Benevolence Fund collections, and monies received in respect of external organisations such as collections for Methodist charities. Whether income was classified as "Restricted" was not in itself a reason for income to be excluded from the assessment calculation.

However, questions have been raised as to whether or not the present assessment system is fair to smaller churches, whilst a number of churches were dis-satisfied with some of the income items which were included in their calculation. The Budget and Assessments Group is meeting to consider possible changes to the factors for 2015/2016 and will be presenting their thoughts to a Church Treasurers meeting in November before proposals are submitted to the February 2015 Circuit Meeting. **Mr John Humbles, Circuit Treasurer.**

Myaware - Our New Circuit Charity

About The Charity

Myaware has been around for nearly 40 years. We aim to make life easier for people living with myasthenia, a severe muscle weakening disease.

It is a little known condition. We are working hard to raise awareness. We are here to support people and their families. We give practical advice and we link people so that they can support each other.

We also seek out and fund the research that brings us closer to a cure. We also raise cash for specialist nurses and advisors. It all helps.



A Brief History

It all started in 1968. Brenda Reid, a patient at the Myasthenia centre at The New End Hospital in Hampstead London approached Dr Lange, a consultant surgeon, and asked for help to set up a support group for people with myasthenia. He suggested starting out as a committee within the Muscular Dystrophy (MD) Group. Dr Lange became the Chairman of the first national Myasthenia Gravis Committee of the MD Group. The same year it became a myasthenia branch.

Committee members joined from across the country and committees were set up so people could get together locally. Lancashire was the first. The Muscular Dystrophy Group gave the myasthenia branch council status in 1972. By 1976 the myasthenia council had decided to set up an independent organisation: the British Association of Myasthenics.

In 1977 the two organisations merged agreeing to work on the research programme together and channel funding through the Myasthenia Council. This continued for eight years.

In the late eighties BAM established its aims and objectives then in 1987 moved into its own premises, Keynes House which was very kindly provided, rent free, by the Liversage Trust in Derby. The M G Research Centre also opened in 1987 at the John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford, with an additional clinical facility at the Radcliffe Infirmary.

The Name

The biggest change recently is in the brand name of the charity – Myaware represents people affected by ALL kinds of myasthenia, and 'fighting myasthenia together' covers our three core aims of Research, Care and Education. The registered name of the charity is still MGA.

Foodbanks and The Trussell Trust

Is there a foodbank collection point or distribution centre near you? The food banks at Warrington and Widnes are at the heart of our Circuit. The Trussell Trust compiles statistics on Foodbank use, and whichever way they are viewed, the figures should alarm us.

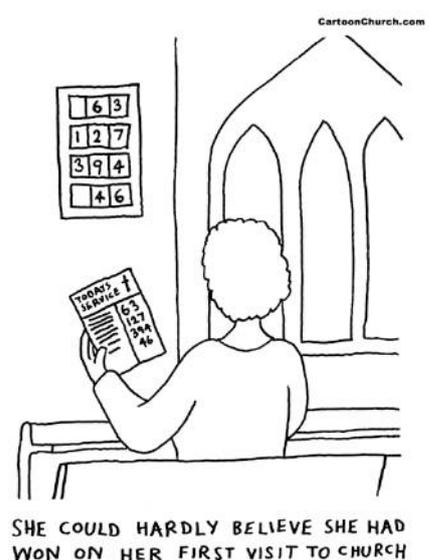
in 2008-2009, the number of 3-day emergency food parcels was just under 26,000.

In 2013-2014, the figure had risen to over 900,000.

Geographically, data is collected from 12 different regions across the United Kingdom.

The area in which food bank use is greatest: The North West.

Find out how you can get involved in the Food Bank Project by talking to your minister.





July 2014: St Martin's Methodist church was transformed into tool sheds and a special workshop including our very own mega machine! The theme for this year's holiday club was the greatness of God's love for all of us.

We learnt about how God's love is far wider and longer and higher and deeper than we can ever imagine. The children have explored this idea through many different Bible stories and craft activities to reinforce this concept.



Throughout the week the children created a wide range of different activities including the following: bottle boats, potato heads, edible Easter gardens and not forgetting the most popular creation of God's eye! Each day the children worked within their tool-sheds: Screwdrivers, Spanners and Nuts and Bolts. The children thoroughly enjoyed being in their different groups, and meeting new friends whilst learning about how strong God's love is for them in a fun and loving environment.



Alongside all the busy activities each day the children participated in a theme song "Nothing's too big, big, big" and a workout routine to "Big fish, little fish", all the children thoroughly enjoyed performing the different songs/actions especially on Friday when we performed to our friends and families. Afterwards we shared reflections based upon the week whilst enjoying the extra special picnic!

Kate Pritchard (Student Helper)

Desert Island Discs

New Song Network Church
hosts the
Circuit Welcome Service for
The Rev'd Dr Sheryl Anderson
Liverpool District Chair

Bold Street Methodist Church
Sunday 5th October

7pm

**Refreshments
Available**



THE BACK PAGE PUZZLE

Reading up, down, backwards, forwards and diagonally, in how many ways can you find the word 'SVMC' hidden in the grid below?

M	C	M	C	V	V	V	S	C	M	V	S	V	V	S	V
M	C	S	C	M	S	M	C	V	V	M	M	C	V	C	M
S	C	V	C	C	S	S	M	S	S	C	V	C	V	V	S
S	S	M	M	S	V	C	V	C	M	S	C	V	C	M	V
M	M	S	C	C	V	C	V	M	S	S	M	S	C	V	V
S	S	C	S	C	C	V	V	S	S	M	V	S	C	V	C
S	C	S	S	V	M	S	M	M	C	S	V	S	V	M	S
V	S	C	M	C	V	S	M	S	M	S	C	M	C	V	V
M	M	C	S	V	M	C	C	C	M	M	V	C	C	C	V
S	C	V	M	V	M	V	V	S	M	M	V	V	M	M	C
M	C	V	V	S	V	M	S	V	M	M	M	S	V	M	S
V	M	V	C	S	C	S	S	M	M	S	V	M	S	V	V
S	M	M	V	C	C	V	M	C	S	S	V	V	S	M	S
C	S	M	C	V	V	S	V	M	C	C	V	V	S	M	S
M	S	S	V	S	V	M	M	V	M	C	V	M	V	C	S
M	V	M	C	S	S	V	V	V	V	C	V	S	C	S	C