

## COMMUNICATING NEWS ACROSS OUR SANKEY VALLEY METHODIST CIRCUIT.

**Feb 2015 No. 7**

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# Congratulations!

'An inspiring mix of ingredients in a framework of much-loved hymns and reflective prayer'; that, with a full congregation, was what welcomed Deacon Angela Shereni as she was formally accepted as a local preacher, in a circuit service at Heath Street. Alongside her entry into the company of preachers was the congratulation to two long-standing pulpit men, Bernard Barbé (60 years) and Bob Stott (50 years). An extract from a gracious letter from Bob was read, and we heard Bernard's story of evacuation from war time Guernsey and the traumas that followed before his discovery of loving support through church fellowship and his call to preach. As the Chair of District reminded us, the preacher's task is to bridge the worlds of scripture and newspaper, of Bible and daily living, so that each inform the other. *The photograph shows (Left to Right) Revd Dr Sheryl Anderson, Chair of District; Deacon Angela Shereni; Mr Bernard Barbé; Revd Lucille Rogers, Circuit Superintendent.*

**THE COMMITTEE OF TRINITY KINGS CROSS** would like to thank all the people involved with the Christmas Hamper appeal. Through your generosity we were able to provide 103 families with a box of food and a bag of toiletries and cleaning items. 255 children and 128 adults received gifts.

The families were referred by social care and health visitors. Your kindness enabled the families to have enough food and to provide a Christmas for their children. One of the social care staff who distributed the hampers said "It's a shame none of you see the delight and gratitude when we give out the hampers."



Once again many thanks for your help, **Revd Jenny McGregor** and **Mrs Connie Smith**

## CIRCUIT CHRISTMAS LIGHTS: A CHRISTMAS WITNESS



Any visit over the Christmas period to a garden centre, or a journey along any of the streets in our area, you would be hard pressed to find the Christmas message of the coming of Jesus shining out brightly in lights. You will have seen plenty of LED lit santas, reindeer and falling snow in windows, gardens and hanging from roofs.

A number of years ago several churches in our circuit decided to do something about it, so they purchased lights depicting the stable, shepherds, angels and wise men, to herald the good news of

the coming of Jesus. They were hung high up on church walls or towers so everyone could see them. Unfortunately they are no longer available to buy. There are santas and merry Christmas lights in abundance, but no nativity scenes.



The Circuit would like to set up a team of volunteers who are able to make some for the circuit, so any church can proclaim the Christmas message in this way. They are made from LED rope lights mounted onto a frame. If anyone is able to spend some time making frames, sorting out the electrical connections, mounting LED rope lights onto frames, please contact **Revd Mark Coles** who will be leading this working group.

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**CIRCUIT CHARITY UPDATE** The total amount raised for the Wesley Hospital in Upper Myanmar was £7,650. Thank you to all those churches, groups and individuals which contributed to this magnificent total. To the end of December 2014, £1,350 had been raised for Myaware, our new charity for the two year period September 14 to August 16. All our churches are encouraged to hold at least one event for the charity – what has your church got planned?  
**Contact John Humbles**



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**CHRISTMAS TRUCE CAROL SERVICE** Special thanks to the **Revd Stephen Kingsnorth** for his organisation of the memorable Christmas Truce Carol Service held at the Halliwell-Jones Stadium before Christmas. A cadet guard of honour welcomed over a 1000 members of the public to the service, combining carol singing with First World War remembrance. There was music from The Lancashire Artillery Band and the Warrington Male Voice Choir, and a re-creation of the famous 1914 'truce' football match on the Warrington Wolves pitch. Wreaths were laid by the Mayor of Warrington (Cllr Ted Finnegan), the Mayor of Hilden (Frau Birgit Alkenings) and Lord Hoyle, President of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Rugby League. The wreaths sat on the pitch area for the fallen of Warrington, the dead of the Warrington rugby league club, and those of twin German town Hilden.

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**CIRCUIT FOCUS ON DISCIPLESHIP** You are invited to join in four sessions exploring what it means to be a disciple of Christ today through Bible study and discussion:

Being a disciple of Jesus Christ in the 21st century

The costs of discipleship

The joys of discipleship

Making more disciples of Christ

At Prescott and Whiston Methodist Church on Monday evenings at 7.30pm: 13, 20, 27 April and 4 May. Also at Heath St Methodist Church, Golborne on Thursday evenings at 7.30pm: 16 April, 21 May, 11 June, 9th July. **Contact Revd Lucille Rogers**

## CREATING THE NEW ST MARTIN'S CHURCH WEBSITE

Just prior to Easter 2014 the St Martin's Stewards took the decision that the Church should have its own website, especially when they realised that the annual cost would only be £53, so I volunteered to have a go at building a site.

Following advice, I selected a technology called Wordpress as the Content Management System (CMS) I would use, on the grounds that it is completely free and very user friendly. In fact there are videos on YouTube demonstrating how to set up a Wordpress website in under two hours. I also downloaded a book named 'Wordpress for Beginners' by Dr Andy Williams onto my Kindle, which cost me a whopping £1.99. This turned out to be an excellent book, giving very clear step by step instructions on how to install Wordpress and create a website from scratch. So [www.stmartinsmethodist.org.uk](http://www.stmartinsmethodist.org.uk) was born.



I created a long narrow image to use as the site header from a collage of three photographs of St Martin's, with the sculpted St Martin's 'Flying Cross' in the centre. This image appears on every page of the site and to some extent acts as the site logo. The contents of the site have been developed

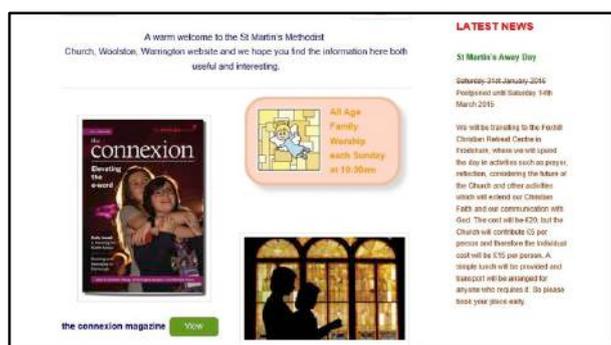
over the last ten months, which means that the main menu, seen on the image above, has had to change several times and currently features the following:

- [About St Martin's](#) contains information about the Church, its history and how it got its name.
- [Church Activities](#) contains details of the regular groups and activities the Church organises, with other information about Sticky Church and Toddler groups.
- [Prayer of the Week](#) is a new page, which will list a number of prayers in blog format. A maximum of ten prayers will eventually be shown on the page and older prayers placed in an accessible archive.
- [Church Life](#) reports important Services and Church events, again in blog format. Some pages contain photo galleries, while the report for the Harvest Service contains the site's first video.
- [Rev's Blog](#) is a series of blogs by the **Revd Stephen Froggatt**
- [Calendars](#) contains the weekly and longer term Church diaries, the Steward's Rota etc.
- [Contact Us](#) contains contact information for the Church and its leaders, including an active Google map showing St Martin's location.

The most important page is [Home](#), since this is the first page anyone sees and therefore has to be sufficiently attractive to encourage viewers to stay and view the rest of the site. I have tried to make it colourful and informative with links to other pages within the site.

Please have a look at our site and post your comments.

[Chris Betts](#), Webmaster, St Martin's Methodist Church  
[chris.betts3@ntlworld.com](mailto:chris.betts3@ntlworld.com) Tel 01925 495454



[www.stmartinsmethodist.org.uk](http://www.stmartinsmethodist.org.uk)

## WEBSITE TRAINING FOR CHURCHES

If you would like a website for your church, some training in these techniques, or if you would like to discuss ways forward with your existing site, please get in touch with me to arrange bespoke training.

**Chris Betts** (details above)

## CIRCUIT CHURCHES REPORTING...



**GOOD NEWS FROM ASHTON** In January Ashton Methodist Church hosted a Churches Together prayer evening as part of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

The church building was open from 7-9pm and set up with several prayer stations. People had the opportunity to count their blessings and offer prayers of thanks and praise; to remember someone in need by placing a glass of salt water (tears) near a cross and reflecting on our call to "rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep." There were prayers received from local businesses and schools which encouraged us to pray for our town and community, and space to pray for all the churches in the town as well as the world in need and persecuted Christians. We also had a quiet candlelit room to simply be still and rest in God's presence and several suggested Bible passages and questions to help us listen to God through the Scriptures. We were glad to welcome friends from several different churches in Ashton in Makerfield and thank God for the space, freedom and opportunity to come together in prayer in this way.

**Deacon Angela Shereni**

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**LYMM METHODIST DRAMATICS** 2014 has been a landmark year for Lymm Methodist dramatics. Early in the year **Kevin Mottershead** (who runs Pantomime) and **Victoria Sims** (who runs the annual musical) agreed to swap them round. The result has been a year with two pantomimes (Snow White and the Magnificent 7 Dwarves and Sinbad the Sailor) but no musicals! But never fear the next musical is in preparation for March 2015 (Dream On, otherwise recognizable as Midsummer Night's Dream). The cast on each occasion ranges from pre-school to well retired and one of the aspects all enjoy as we rehearse and perform is this mix, which is rarely achieved in any other forum. All muck in with preparing props, scenery as well as learning lines and performing, it really is a team effort each time. Of course we can't forget the music for these performances, which on each occasion is brilliantly arranged by **Martin Fowler**. Indeed, a frequently fed back response after a performance is the obvious enthusiasm that comes across to the audience.



In content of course the musical and pantomime do differ. Whilst panto relies heavily on ad libbing, audience interaction and enthusiastic rather than tuneful singing, the annual musical concentrates on good quality musical performance and even harmonies on occasion! As a source of outreach both are widely regarded as very successful, both for attracting new folk to take part, and bringing in strangers to watch. If you've never been to one you don't know what you're missing!

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### **CROSS LANE UNITED CHURCH, NEWTON LE WILLOWS**

On October 12th 2014, in place of the usual morning service, the Sunday School held a Prize Giving with presentations by **May Chandley**, a former Sunday School Leader for many years. This Prize Giving was of particular importance because it was the first held in the church for over 25 years. It was one year ago towards the end of 2013 that the Sunday School had been re-established, along with the Friday evening Youth Club.

**Linda Tither** is the present Sunday School Leader and Youth Club Leader and she, with her supporters, led an active year in both. Linda has written the following piece telling us about the Sunday School and the Youth Club. **Contact Siân Spink.**

## CROSS LANE UNITED SUNDAY SCHOOL AND YOUTH CLUB, NEWTON LE WILLOWS

It is just over 12 months since the start of the Sunday School with just three children. The numbers have gradually been growing and at the Prize Giving in October we gave out Bibles or Prayer books to 4 children. We currently have 18 children ranging in age from babies a few months old up to 16 years.

We meet with the congregation for the first hymn and prayer, then go to the Sunday School for songs, stories to match the Lectionary and craft activities, before returning to the congregation during the last hymn to show them what we have been doing and sing a song. We then go back into the Sunday School for biscuits and juice before they leave with a small pamphlet relating to the lesson, containing crosswords, word-search, colouring pages etc.

The children have done a Nativity Play at Christingle and made a Harvest scarecrow for Harvest amongst a lot of other things. We look forward to our second year.

We started the Youth Club in August last year with just a few members of the volunteers and helpers. There are now approximately 60 members on the books, although the average number is 20+ each week. It has been a busy year and we have had highs and lows.

We have had a number of visits that were educational but fun, with St John's Ambulance and Fire Brigade as well as a self-defence tutor, and a special visit by St Helen's Mayor who requested a visit because he was a former member.

There has been a Christmas Party and an Old Fashioned Sports Day and Strawberry Tea which raised £100 for Sports Relief.

At the Club there is Table Tennis, 2 Pool Tables, Wii Games and Karaoke, Table Football, Air Hockey and an activity table where we get thoroughly messed up doing things like carving pumpkins etc.

They like their refreshments (sweets and drinks etc) and vary it with beef burgers, pizzas and hotdogs as well as having the ever popular free pancake on occasion.

There has been an end of year disco in July and we went to LA Bowl on our last night before Christmas.

Three of the older teenagers have joined the Sunday School and are potential leaders of both, so all in all the Sunday School and Youth Club have been a success this year, bringing much needed youth to the church and making them aware of Jesus and Christianity. **Contact Linda Tither**



*Photo on the left:*

A display the Sunday School at Cross Lane created in November showing some of the work undertaken during the year.

## THE METHODIST CHURCH OF GOLBORNE AND LOWTON AT HEATH STREET

The church is officially known as The Methodist Church of Golborne and Lowton at Heath Street – a long title... so we just call it “Heath Street”. Anyone who worshipped here 20 years ago would hardly recognise it as it stands today. The pews were removed in 1999 when a “Vision 2000” fund was set up to raise funds to modernise the church. Through the fantastic achievements of everyone in the church over £90,000 was raised to bring about what we see today. The screen was erected in front of the organ and the worship furniture removed and replaced. Further renovations were made to the kitchen area and Sunday School and the glass porch at the front always provides a welcome to those entering the church for whatever reason. With an ageing organ we also reluctantly decided to purchase a digital equivalent.

In 2011, the new meeting room was built on the back of the church, new toilets installed and the car park re-surfaced. Today the church is very much a community church with daily coffee mornings, slimming club, dance, Zumba and keep fit clubs. We also offer our facilities to the local Gateway group for adults with learning disabilities.



The vast majority of Lane Head Lowton's congregation made their spiritual home at Heath Street and for the past 4 years have been made to feel so welcome that the upheaval was made much easier and leaving the church we all loved was quickly forgotten – well almost! We continue to worship ecumenically with Golborne and Lowton churches hosting a Praise service in May.

Heath Street has certainly gone a long way to following Jesus' teachings in Matthew 25. They have welcomed the folks from Lane Head into their fellowship and always give a warm welcome to anyone coming through its doors. Several of our members are busy “clothing the naked” as they volunteer in the Hospice shop. We have responded to Jesus' call to “feed the hungry” through our

support of the Lowton Food Bank; and our daily Coffee Mornings give a “drink to the thirsty.” By supporting Christian Aid, Action for Children, Methodist Homes for the Aged, Open Doors and the Epiphany Trust we try to “support the homeless.” We're still working on “visiting those in prison...” but then through our Pastoral visitors' scheme we visit those who are imprisoned metaphorically in their homes through old age or invalidity.

Between the two churches their Sunday Schools have over 250 years of caring and supporting children and developing their faith. Today we have a thriving Sunday School who performed 'the Wriggly Nativity' brilliantly at the Epiphany Trust Carol Service; a 'Messy Church' and a Young Carer's Group – still putting children at the heart of the church. Not necessarily on a Sunday, but as ever showing the love of God to future generations.

A generous Circuit grant for the new electronic organ motivated us to find the rest of the money. We have been attempting to raise this by a series of Afternoon teas and Concerts given by our most talented organist Shade (Chort) Black. A New Year Concert performed by Shade demonstrated not only his own talents but the scope of the organ and £196 was raised for the Circuit charity – Myaware. Further concerts are planned for March.

In addition as adults we are still learning... In our monthly Fellowship group **Revd Lucille Rogers** led four sessions on Talking of God – excellent. Yes, like most other churches we do have an ageing worshipping congregation, but as intimated earlier, the church is “the people”, “all the people” – and we are truly blessed. **Contact Gill Dickinson**



## NEW SONG NETWORK SET FOUR CHALLENGES FOR ADVENT/CHRISTMAS 2015

- Collecting Advent calendars for the Food Banks.
- Collecting food, toiletries, gifts, children's selection boxes for the Trinity/Kings Cross project of providing hampers for those in need.
- Carol singing in Latchford village with the proceeds going to Myaware, the circuit charity.
- The Hot Drinks Ministry at Walton Lea crematorium and Fox Covert cemetery on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day to once again provide refreshments, a friendly welcome and someone to talk to.

So, how did we do?

- 80 Advent calendars were collected going to the Food Banks at Warrington, Widnes and Runcorn (*see photo*)
- A car-full of supplies was taken to Trinity where they helped to make up the 103 hampers sent out by the project.
- New Song, Latchford MC, Warrington Brass Band and Station Coffee combined to have a good sing - with free mince pies. Many people from the local community came and joined in. Good outreach!
- As ever an amazing response from New Song folk to run the two refreshment stations. The gazebo at Fox Covert, on top of the hill, as usual threatened to blow away but we think it might have been 1 degree warmer than 2013! We are there to give drinks, support and indeed comfort in many instances to those who have come to bring their flowers but we too receive such words of thanks that we get a warm glow too. We were brought biscuits and chocolates to add to the supplies and so many said 'see you next year'. And, of course, we will be there next year at Christmas (and on Mothering Sunday).



Combining all this wonderful outreach with brilliant worship it was a great 1st Christmas for New Song Network Church as we celebrated Emmanuel, God with us. We are now looking forward in the next 6 months to holding additional Breakfast and Sunday evening services along with New Song Kids which started on 1st February. **Contact Kit Heald and Revd Jackie Bellfield**

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## CROSS LANE CHRISTINGLE SERVICE

Our Christingle service this year was attended by 37 adults & 13 children - more than we have ever had before. Some were from our Sunday school, some from youth club & others from Messy Church; some of the adults came from outside our usual church group. We began with mince pies & drinks, then we made our Christingles, then we joined in "Jesus' Birthday Party" - a cartoon-based story with much audience participation & laughter, and with readings & prayers in between. It was good to see people leaving by the light of their Christingles. **Contact June Kelly**

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As part of our **CIRCUIT FOCUS ON DISCIPLESHIP** we are delighted to invite you to come and share **an evening with Adrian Plass** (Christian writer, speaker and humourist) hosted by our Circuit on **Saturday 18th April**.

Details of venue, etc. to follow, but please put the date in your diaries for now.

Find out more about Adrian Plass at <http://www.adrianplass.com>



# DIARY DATES



- Thursday 12th March - **LP & WL Meeting** @ Stockton Heath. 7.30pm
- Tuesday 24th March - **Presbyteral Synod** @ Court Hey. 9.30am-1pm
- Saturday 28th March - **LP & WL Training** @ Farnworth. 10am-3pm
- Saturday 18th April - **Adrian Plass** (see page 7)
- Saturday 25th April - **Liverpool District Synod** @ Burscough
- Saturday 9th May - **Circuit Quiet Day** @ St Philips. 10am-3pm
- Wednesday 3rd June - **LP & WL Meeting** @ Farnworth. 7.30pm

## Circuit Quiet Day

9th May 2015

‘Love was his Meaning’

Leader: Rev Janet Fletcher  
Diocesan Spirituality Officer in the Bangor Diocese

Blessed *Julian* of Norwich

St Philips Church, Westbrook

**A day looking at Julian of Norwich with times for quietness and prayer.**

10.00am for coffee  
10.30am start

Finishing at 3.00pm

Full details nearer the time.

**For Local Preachers & Worship Leaders  
and anyone who leads Local Arrangements**

## TRAINING

Saturday 28th March 2015  
9.30am-3pm  
at Farnworth Methodist Church  
Derby Road  
Widnes WA8 9JX

Keynote Speaker:  
Rev Rachel Deigh  
(District Mission and Evangelism Enabler)

With a variety of afternoon Workshops

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### TRAINING WORKSHOPS on:

- The art of preaching
- New Songs from 'Singing the Faith'
- Visual Aids and Creativity in Worship
- Discipleship: some key Bible passages
- Help! There are kids in the congregation
- Methodists on Mission in Uganda

*This Circuit Newsletter is edited and produced by the SVMC Communications Team. Submissions for the next issue should reach the Circuit Office [crc@svmc.org.uk](mailto:crc@svmc.org.uk) by Monday 1st June. Thank you in advance for your articles and permission-cleared photos. We reserve the right to edit all submissions.*