



# CIRCUIT NEWSLETTER

Welcome back to our Circuit Newsletter. I hope you have found some way to cope in this heat! I have been experimenting with a different style newsletter, with thanks for the help from our District digital enabler, Naomi, which we hope you will like but welcome your comments to review going forward. Thank you for your articles, they look great and show the good work across the Circuit. Caroline

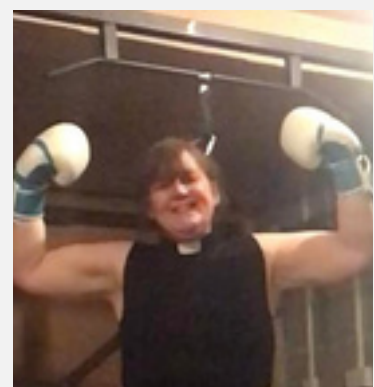
## CIRCUIT TEAM



REV'D ANDREW BIGGS



REV'D SUE JACOBS



REV'D KATHY FLYNN



CAROLINE TODD



SONIA DURATURO

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

01	<b>Circuit News</b>	
	Pastoral letter from Rev'd Kathy Flynn	03
	Revd Sue Jacobs Testimony Service	05
	An evening at RAF Brize Norton	07
	Circuit Finance Steward vacancy	08
02	<b>Across the Churches</b>	
	Westcote anniversary	08
	MHA - Julie Biggs	09
	High Street - art exhibition	11
	Christian bookshop, Witney	11
	High Street - Church of Sanctuary	12
	Davenport Road news	13
	Chipping Norton news	13

---

If you'd like to submit a news piece for future Circuit newsletters, please contact Caroline Todd, Circuit Administrator.



[administrator@westoxfordshiremethodists.org.uk](mailto:administrator@westoxfordshiremethodists.org.uk)



01608 656768

---

## Pastoral Letter from Rev'd Kathy Flynn

### *Isaiah 64:8 'we are the clay you are the potter'*

Recently my friend's treated us all to a lesson on a potter's wheel, it was so much fun, the teacher even played unchained melody as we imagined Patrick Swayze behind us, it was an afternoon filled with so much laughter, it reminded me of the hymn 'Abba Father you are the potter we are the clay the works of your hands', and it also gave me a new insight into God as the Potter. I'd imagined pottery as gentle and graceful, and although the teacher said I was a natural my friends struggled. The clay wobbled, resisted, collapsed, even flew off the wheel at one point. It took strength, pressure, and constant attention just to keep it centred. But it also needed great gentleness and patience to make it rise and spread.

"We are the clay, and you are our potter." If shaping a simple bowl is that challenging, how much more care must God take as He shapes us.

On the wheel, the potter never let's go of the clay, you are constantly working it. One hand stays on the clay at all times while the wheel is spinning the second hand only coming off the clay to add water. Every movement is intentional—steady, pressing, adding water when things dry out, reshaping when things go wrong.

And that is how God works with us. He leans in. He stays close. He keeps His hands upon us.

*(continued on next page)*

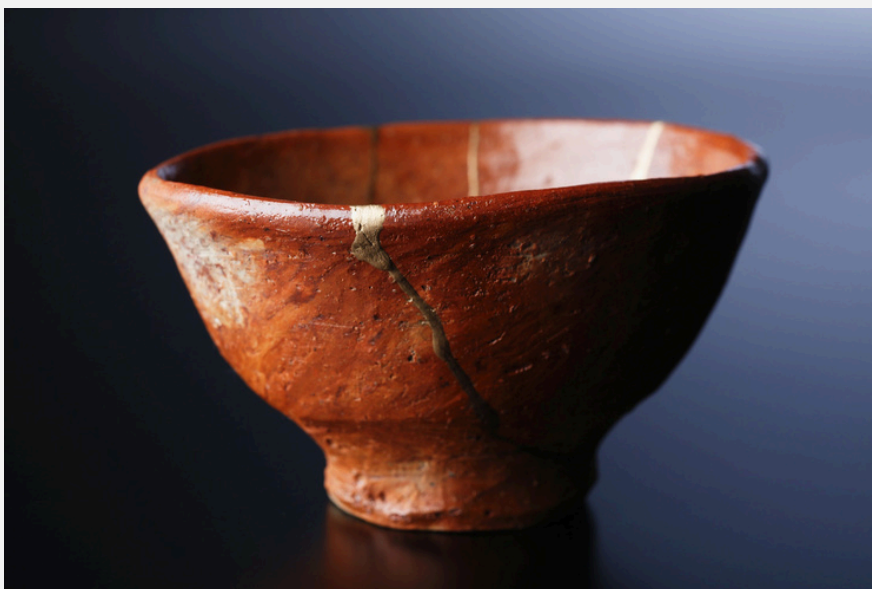
# CIRCUIT NEWS

I love the Japanese art of kintsugi, where broken pottery is repaired with pure gold. The cracks are not hidden; they are honoured. The vessel becomes more beautiful because of its brokenness, not in spite of it. Its story becomes its strength.

What a picture of God's grace.

We are not only shaped by His hands; we are restored by His mercy. The places where we have cracked, shattered, or fallen apart are not discarded. In God's hands, they become lines of gold—testimonies of healing, redemption, and hope. The Potter who forms us is also the Artist who repairs us, making us more radiant than before. My clumsy attempt at pottery taught me this: If the potter gives up, the clay stays formless. But God never gives up. And even when we break, He does not throw us away. He fills the cracks with glory. We are still on the wheel. We are still being restored. And His hands are still upon us—strong, patient, and full of grace—are still shaping us into his image, beautiful, and whole.

Love and blessings, Rev'd Kathy



## Rev'd Sue Jacobs Testimony Service

### *An account by Davenport Road*

From 5.00 pm they started arriving and the car park assistants were immediately set to work organizing and guiding the numerous cars that came through the gates. Then folk were welcomed at the door by our temporary Super, Rev Kathy and our stewards before finding a seat in the extended church building. 140 seats were out and everyone was occupied. Others from the home church ended up sitting on tables at the back! In addition there were 39 on Zoom from far and wide.

As the principle participants and their guests were welcomed by Rev Sonia Hicks the Dav Rd “young” band took their place to lead us in praise, which could be heard way down the street. Who can forget the wonder of singing “Goodness of God” as Sue’s song of commitment.

Then to the important part of the evening, Sue’s responses to her calling and development of her ministry. She arrived in West Oxfordshire which was so obviously out of her comfort zone but throughout the two years she has grown and endeared herself to all both inside the circuit and outside. God has called her to experience this “rural” life (only 1 white line down the middle of the road). As Sue said during her testimony “Being Ordained as God’s hand in this world will mean that God has completed in me, the thing that I always believed was impossible and I couldn’t be more grateful for the calling he has placed on my life.” In the words of St Teresa ‘Yours are the hands, with which he blesses the world’.

*(Continued on next page)*

# CIRCUIT NEWS

And so she moves forward to full ordination as minister in the Methodist church. As the words of Daniel L Schutte's song say,  
"Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?  
I have heard you calling in the night  
I will go, Lord, if you lead me  
I will hold your people in my heart"  
{STF 552}

## A Big Thank You

Can I take this opportunity to thank everyone in the circuit who provided cakes for Rev Sue's Testimony Service on Sunday May 17<sup>th</sup>. So many helped us provide a feast for the those who attended and shared in a wonderful evening of Commitment, Praise and Support for Rev Sue.

What a joyous occasion and didn't you sing well.

Thank you all.

Judith and Hospitality Team at Dav Rd.

If you'd like to watch a video about Sue's vocational testimony, [click here](#) (you'll be directed to the District's YouTube channel).



## **An Unforgettable Evening at RAF Brize Norton** *An account by Rev Kathy Flynn*

I had the honour of attending the Annual Formal Reception at RAF Brize Norton, and it was an experience I will treasure for a long time.

The evening began with a warm welcome by the Captain who greeted guests with genuine warmth and interest, giving a real sense of occasion. The celebrations continued with wonderful hospitality and music and the chance to meet members of the station. It was inspiring to hear about the life and work of those who serve at Brize Norton and other invited guests who support the base and to see and feel the strong sense of community that holds everything together.

Guests were invited to gather outside where we witnessed a parade by the RAF marching band and serving personnel, marching with such precision and dignity that it was impossible not to feel moved. The music, the discipline, and the pride on display reminded us of the deep commitment and professionalism that underpin the work of the RAF. We were also privileged to a truly spectacular finale – a fly-by, perfectly timed and beautifully executed. The aircraft swept overhead with breathtaking power, a dramatic and fitting end to a remarkable night.

I left feeling deeply grateful: grateful for the invitation, grateful for the hospitality, and grateful for the men and women who serve our country with such dedication. It was a privilege to be part of the evening, and a reminder of the values of service, courage, and community that we hold dear.

Let us continue to keep all who serve at RAF Brize Norton, and their families, in our prayers.

# CIRCUIT NEWS

## Circuit Finance Steward

*Urgently required*

Voluntary Role

Please contact: Revd Andrew Biggs, Superintendent Minister

Telephone: 01608 544362

Mobile: 07968798317

Email: [superintendent@westoxfordshiremethodists.org.uk](mailto:superintendent@westoxfordshiremethodists.org.uk)

[Click here to see role description.](#)



## NEWS ACROSS THE CHURCHES

### Westcote Methodist Chapel Anniversary

You are most welcome to join Westcote Methodist Chapel for their anniversary service.

- Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> July at 3pm
- Guest speaker: Matt Forsyth (current Vice President of the Methodist Conference and District Mission Team Leader)
- Service followed by tea on the patio.

# NEWS ACROSS THE CHURCHES

## MHA - an article from Julie Biggs

Methodist Homes, or MHA, was founded just over 80 years ago, in 1943, by a retired Methodist minister, Rev. Walter Hall.

It was before the creation of the welfare state, when many elderly people who were poor and could no longer work often found that their only option was the workhouse. It was set up as an independent charity but with strong links to the Methodist church.

Today, MHA has over 80 residential, specialist dementia and nursing care homes. It runs over 60 retirement living schemes and it has over 60 community schemes supporting people in their own homes.

MHA is the largest charity care provider for older people in the UK, offering some of the highest quality care, accommodation and support services throughout Britain - helping people to “live later life well”. It is also one of the very few not-for-profit care providers in the UK. This means that there are no shareholders, so all donations and any surplus generated are invested back into MHA's services.

MHA offers care and support to all those in need regardless of faith and only a few of our residents these days are Methodists, but it still has strong support from the Methodist church and from other Christians. MHA are unique in the care sector in that all their homes have chaplains. In the early days chaplaincy was provided by the local Methodist minister but these days all homes and schemes have a paid chaplain on the staff. All our homes also have in-house music therapists.

*(Continued on next page)*

# NEWS ACROSS THE CHURCHES

I work as the chaplain at MHA The Homestead which is the Methodist Homes care home in Carterton. I work 3 days a week and have been there now for just over four years. The Homestead is a residential and dementia care home with capacity to take 68 residents. As well as offering general pastoral care I take services during the week for those who wish to attend. Ministers from our circuit come in once a month to lead a communion service.

Chaplaincy is funded entirely through donations (rather than from what our residents pay), and much of this comes from collections made by churches and circuits. I would therefore ask that all our churches consider a collection during the year. I am happy to come and speak at groups or services or take a complete MHA Sunday service. I can also arrange visits to The Homestead if anyone would like to come and see what we do or would like to volunteer.

Julie Biggs



# NEWS ACROSS THE CHURCHES



## High St Methodist Church, Witney

### Drawn to Imperfection art exhibition 3<sup>rd</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> July

At High Street Methodists, we have been preparing to host an exciting Art Exhibition by Christian artist Dave Nevard.

Dave's work has been exhibited across the country in places such as York Minster, as well as featuring on Songs of Praise last year.

There are 21 large, black and white portraits of characters from the Bible inviting viewers to step into their story - it is a Bible encounter through Art and Story.

The exhibition runs from July 3<sup>rd</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup>, with a special event on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> at 2pm when there will be a Q&A session with author David Painting. More info can be found on the poster at the back of this newsletter.

Do bring friends and family, and spread the word. Above all, please would you pray for the event and those who attend.

## Christian bookshop, Witney

The Christian bookshop in Witney is open behind all the roadworks. They have a good selection of books starting at £1 , and if you can't find what you're looking for they can order it in. There's also a range of cards and gifts. Do pop in!

# NEWS ACROSS THE CHURCHES

## Exploring the concept of Sanctuary Church at High Street (HSMC)

Did you know that Oxford County Council was a Local Authority of Sanctuary? This was only discovered by accident, but it got us thinking, if the County has sanctuary status then West Oxfordshire and therefore Witney must be included. So as a church hadn't we better get started and find out more? This is how it all began.

HSMC was already practising the ministry of welcome in various ways but specifically through the coffee bar and the weekly community meal. This has been a good basis for exploring what sanctuary means and discovering that it's much more than welcoming asylum seekers. Hospitality rather than hostility applies to the welcome we give to anyone who feels vulnerable, anyone who is different and who needs a safe space.

HSMC has spent almost a year focussed on what this concept means for us as a church. We have used local arrangements and café worship to discuss the implications for our faith; we have welcomed Rev Inderjit Bhogal to talk about the Church of Sanctuary movement; we have talked with asylum seekers living locally about their lived experience; house groups have used sanctuary material in their studies; we continue to engage with local organisations such as Asylum Welcome.



Our next step is to apply for Church of Sanctuary status, and we ask for prayerful support from other churches in the circuit.

# NEWS ACROSS THE CHURCHES

## Update from Chipping Norton Church

In May, Chipping Norton Church held a coffee morning and soup lunch, and were pleased to raise £180 for Christian Aid.

Their junior Church met in the May half term for a crafty morning and to start planning for the Summer celebrations service on July 5<sup>th</sup>, and they are also looking forward to the Lido swimming party in August.

## Update from Davenport Road Church

For the past few years, Dav Rd friends and fellowship have endeavoured to enjoy a social outing together. This year it was suggested we have our trip to Windsor plus a boat trip.

### Reflection on our Outing to Windsor

“The words that spring to mind from an old song.....”Didn’t we have a lovely day, the day we went to.....”. This year we can’t say the sun shone, but most of us managed to avoid the rain. WE nearly had a coachful and it was lovely to meet some others who don’t necessarily attend our church. The company and warm fellowship was excellent. (And best of all, we didn’t lose anyone!!!) Some went in the castle, some followed the Queen Elizabeth trail, some walked along the riverbank and others just mooched around enjoying doing something completely different. The boat trip was “eventful”, but God was indeed watching over us and brought us through. It was a lovely day. I know some of us have some super photos but all of us will have special memories.”

**Next social event at Dav Rd - all welcome!**

**Saturday August 15<sup>th</sup> from 5pm - Grand Barbecue, skittles and games evening.** This will be a fundraiser towards our plans for kitchen improvements. More information will follow in the next newsletter.

# DRAWN TO IMPER- FECTION

## ART EXHIBITION

A unique invitation into the story of the Bible through 21 contemporary portraits

### DATES:

**3<sup>rd</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> July 2026**

**3<sup>rd</sup> July: 12pm - 6pm**

**4<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> July : 10am - 4pm**

Event: 10th July : 2pm

Q&A with Author of 'Drawn to Imperfection' Book - David Painting

### LOCATION:

High Street Methodist Church - Witney

40 Witney High Street, OX28 6HG

DRAWN  
TO  
IMPER-  
FECTION



Tel: 01993 709874  
[www.highstmethodists.co.uk](http://www.highstmethodists.co.uk)

Artist: Dave Nevard  
**FREE ENTRY - ALL WELCOME**

