



The **Methodist Church**
West Oxfordshire Circuit

Circuit News

February 2026



Caroline Todd, Circuit Administrator

Email:

administrator@westoxfordshiremethodists.org.uk

Tel: 01608 656768

CIRCUIT TEAM

Revd Andrew Biggs, Superintendent Minister

Revd Sue Jacobs

Revd Kathy Flynn



Revd. Andrew Biggs, Pastoral Letter

Welcome to this first edition of the new circuit newsletter. This is a new initiative created by Caroline, that we hope will be a means of connecting the circuit by providing a place to share information and to engage in dialogue through articles and news. Rather than just being a list of events it would make for a much more interesting read if we could hear news of what is happening in our churches as well as some interesting articles about issues that you engage with. If you would like to submit any item, please send them to Caroline in the Circuit Office.

It is fitting that we publish the first edition of this new newsletter at the beginning of a new calendar year. Over the past few weeks, many of our churches will have been engaging in annual Covenant Services, which are a chance to reflect on the state of our discipleship and our relationship to God in Christ as we say the Covenant prayer together. I pray that you will have found this a moment of deep reflection that will encourage you in your discipleship through the Methodist way of life.

At this time also we have said our 'goodbyes' to Rev'd Jason Cooke, who requested to leave the Circuit early in order to take up a new ministry post at a Baptist Church in Southampton. We are sad to see Jason, Adrienne, Ariyaj and Malachi leave us but we send them with our blessings and pray for their flourishing in their new home and appointment.

We are pleased to say that through the second round of the stationing process we were matched with the Rev'd Molly Chitokwindo. Following a visit to the circuit, an invitation was made by the Circuit Invitation Committee (acting on behalf of the Circuit Meeting) and accepted by Molly which means that (subject to the agreement of Conference) she will be

joining the Circuit in September. Molly will have responsibility for High Street and Faringdon churches.

In the interim the remaining circuit ministers will offer care for High Street and Faringdon. This will stretch us more thinly but we will have the support of the Chair of District, Rev'd Sonia Hicks and our Supernumerary ministers. This will be especially important during April - June when I will be on sabbatical. The Conference mandates a sabbatical for ministers every seven years of ministry and so I will be taking this time to catch up on some reading, to visit friends and family, to get out in the fresh air and do something different!

As we approach Lent, the Methodist Church is taking the theme of 'Let go and be open'. 'Lent is a season of invitation. It calls us to loosen our grip on what holds us back - habits, assumptions, fears - and to open ourselves to the transforming presence of the of God. Across our District this Lent, we are invited into a shared journey: letting go of what limits life and, and becoming open to what God is doing among us. This is a path, not a performance' (from the District Lent resource). I hope you will consider looking at and using this year's Lent resources: https://media.methodist.org.uk/media/documents/Lent_2026_Worship_Resource.pdf

Every Blessing
Andrew

Rev'd Andrew Biggs (Superintendent Minister)

Services & Events around the circuit and District

Circuit Services

LET'S WORSHIP

CIRCUIT TOGETHER

29th March – 6.00pm (Palm Sunday at High Street) and
17th May – 6.00pm (Rev. Sue Jacobs Testimony Service at Davenport Road)

**The Next Circuit Meeting will be held on:
Thursday 5th March
At Davenport Road Methodist Church
Time: 7.30 pm
(Please note this date has been changed from 12th March)**

Richard Bowler, Circuit Member

Youth work across the circuit - 3-Gen

As this is the first edition of the Circuit Newsletter, I thought I would look back to a wonderful event that happened last year. At the beginning of October, Long Hanborough church took 7 young people to 3Generate. This is the annual children's and youth assembly for the Methodist Church and took place at the NEC Birmingham from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon. There was approximately 2000 children and young people from 4-18 years old plus 1000 leaders and volunteers.

This was the first time we had taken anyone from Long Hanborough, previously groups from High Street and Faringdon had attended. For some of our group, this was the first time that they had been to anything like this, and it won't be the last. Everything happens inside the halls at the NEC, including sleeping in tents indoors. With that number of people, the Friday night's sleep can be limited with all the excitement and snoring etc!

The weekend is an opportunity for the young people to gather for worship, activities, debates, and fellowship. They get the chance to meet other young Christians in a safe place and explore themselves in their Christian life.



The theme for the weekend was "Journey of a lifetime" and I believe this was certain one for our young people attending. They had a great time going to different sessions from dance workshops, wall climbing, craft groups, a farm petting area, Bible studies, and many more, including chill out zones for a bit of peace. There was a silent disco and live bands playing with a few tired legs from all the dancing.

I have been several times to 3Generate, as a volunteer and a leader for a group, and I always come away with great feeling of joy and excitement at seeing so many young people at an event

like this, giving hope for the future. With that in mind, when we came back to Hanborough, we held a service which the young people helped to prepare and lead, and the three of them spoke to us and have now become members of the Church. It is through events like this, that we will be able to see the young people taking a greater part in our Churches.

There is so much that I could say about 3-Generate and these pictures don't tell the full story, but if you would like to know more and have any young people who might be interested in going later this year, please do contact me. Or look on the Methodist website under 3Generate.

Richard



DISTRICT ORDINAND'S
TESTIMONY SERVICE
6PM
SUNDAY 17TH MAY 2026
CELEBRATE WITH US THE TESTIMONY OF THE
REV'D SUE JACOBS
AT
DAVENPORT ROAD METHODIST CHURCH
WITNEY, OXFORDSHIRE OX28 6EJ

Please ensure each church knows who is attending and to give final numbers to Caroline Todd, Circuit Administrator, who will liaise with the District Office. No later than Thursday 30th April



Comings and Goings

Sadly, you will know by now that Revd Jason Cooke from High Street, Witney and Faringdon, left the circuit at the end of January to take up a position not within the Methodist Church.

This will leave a huge void. The fact this is late has meant Andrew could let people know of the arrangements so far in his pastoral letter. We pray for Molly as she prepares for her future ministry within West Oxfordshire Methodist Circuit.

We also pray for Jason and all his family as they start the next new chapter in their life and journey with Christ.



Sabbatical:

Revd Andrew Biggs will be taking a 3-month planned sabbatical from 1st April to 30th June 2026. Arrangements will be in place to cover some of his duties. The circuit office will remain open Tues-Thurs and the Revd Sue Jacobs and The Revd Kathy Flynn will be in their respective churches.

CIRCUIT FINANCE STEWARD

urgently required

Voluntary Role (full role specification available)

Please contact: Revd Andrew Biggs, Superintendent Minister

Telephone: 01608 544362

Mobile: 07968798317

Email: superintendent@westoxfordshiremethodists.org.uk

Statistics for Mission

Has your church entered their statistics data yet?

Please check and complete as a matter of urgency

[The Methodist Church - Statistics for Mission](#)

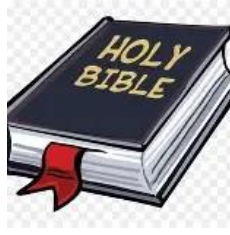
Minster Lovell Methodist Church

We invite everyone especially our Circuit friends to all our events especially: -

Saturday café from 10.00 – 12.00 noon.

Sunday worship 11.00 – 12.00 noon.

A time of Bible reflection 10.30- 12.00 on the second and fourth Monday of each month the next one being February 9th.



The Annual Good Friday service at 6.00pm. which will be led by our Minister Rev. Sue Jacobs.

For further information contact Dawn on 01993 775675 dawn.haley8@gmail.com

Exciting News The 2nd and 4th Monday of every month from 10.30 to Noon we are holding a quiet time of reflection based on the Scriptures. The gathering is open to ALL. Everybody is welcome to spend time with friends we know and friends we will get to know. Anybody curious about the Bible and Jesus, anyone of Faith and anyone who struggles to find or regain Faith this is the group for you.

If you wish to know more in advance, please contact Mary on 07873778400.

Tea, Coffee, Biscuits and a warm welcome is assured.

We invite everyone especially our Circuit friends to all our events especially: -

Saturday café from 10.00 – 12.00. where cake and drinks are served and friendships made.

Sunday worship 11.00 – 12.00 where a warm friendly welcome awaits

The annual Good Friday service at 6.00pm. which will be led by our Minister Rev. Sue Jacobs.

For further information contact Dawn on 01993 775675 dawn.haley8@gmail.com

Stonesfield Methodist Church

World Day of Prayer Service

Friday 6th March at 2.00pm

Everyone welcome

Light refreshments will follow

Chipping Norton Methodist Church

Junior Church

We meet about once per month for a casual family time of children friendly worship.
We meet in the Church Hall at 10.45 am then go up for the last hymn, prayer and fellowship with the church family.

Please check Chipping Norton Methodist Church website or Sunday announcement sheets for dates.

We are currently planning an Easter display for the front of our church and will be meeting on Tuesday 17th February with the children for an “art, craft and pancake” get together in the hall from 10-12

Contact: Elaine Parsons

Wednesday Coffee Mornings

09.30 – 11.30 am

Pop in for a cuppa and chat

Cake stall, bric-a-brac, books and more

All to raise funds for church.

1st Weds of each month is a charity coffee morning

Feb – Scoliosis support & research

Mar – Methodists Missions in Britain

Christmas tree Festival 2025

The Christmas Tree Festival Committee would like to thank everyone who helped in some way or came along to the Festival. The standard of trees was high, and we raised £600 towards church funds. Due to the increased cost in trees, we have decided this will be our last one after 17 years. However, we will be putting on a different event, and we have our thinking caps on already.

Please talk to Elaine Parsons if you would like to be involved or have any ideas for next Advent.

Other News across the West Oxfordshire Circuit and District

Witney Community Meal make it onto the One Voice podcast.

Witney Community Meal continues to be a warm and welcoming space where people from across the town and beyond can come together over good food and great company. Each meal is freshly prepared by dedicated volunteers, offering not just nourishment but a chance to connect, chat, and feel part of a supportive community.

Whether someone comes along regularly or joins for the first time, the Community Meal is open to everyone and free of charge. It's a simple idea with a big impact—sharing food, kindness, and conversation, and reminding us all that no one in Witney has to feel alone. It's held every Thursday at High Street Methodist Church and at the vanguard of this wonderful initiative is Adam Noble, who was recently invited to a reception at 10, Downing Street. Adam joins John Rose on the latest District podcast to talk over what has become a weekly lifeline for so many.

[You can listen to that conversation here](#)

Well that is it for us for this month. As we journey towards February and Lent, we contemplate a time of reflection, prayer, simplicity and spiritual renewal and focus on Christ as the light of the world.



Chipping Norton

On the Buses....

Those of you with a keen eye will have spotted a familiar face on the buses recently. The Revd Andrew Biggs, Superintendent Minister for the West Oxfordshire Methodist Circuit has taken a seat on the V19 Shuttle Bus, not as a passenger but as its driver! Andrew recently passed his Institute of Advanced Motorist (IAM) exam and thought he would take things one step further as a way of reaching out to local people in the community. He drives this service approximately every other Wednesday (subject to church plans). So, if you see him driving through town give him a big 'Chippy Wave'.



The **Chipping Norton Shuttle Bus** is a volunteer-run service that provides transportation within Chipping Norton. It operates alongside other bus services in the area. The shuttle bus aims to connect residents and visitors to key locations in the town, enhancing local mobility.



Davenport Road Methodist Church

On the first Sunday in February every year a service of rededication and enrolment takes place at Dav Rd for the 1st Witney Girls' Brigade. The company has been in existence over 60 years and many hundreds of girls and young women have passed through its doors in that time. Perhaps you may have been one of those girls. This February 1st Rev Sue Jacobs, as chaplain, will once again be conducting the service and welcoming many parents and friends, some of whom never attend any regular church.

The motto of the Girls' Brigade is "Seek, Serve and Follow Christ" and its aim is "To help girls become followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, and through self-control, reverence and a sense of responsibility to find true enrichment of life".

The organization operates in over 50 countries worldwide and was originally founded in Ireland in 1893. The Girls' Brigade around the world today provides a range of projects to engage girls and young women in activities that reflect friendship, faith and fun. Here in Witney, we love the girls that join us week by week and are always happy to welcome new girls aged 5 and above.

The girls particularly enjoy cooking and craft! We have themed evenings and always have some games too!

Let's remember in prayer each child and their families and officers, past and present who have made a difference to young Christian lives over so many years.

Charlbury Methodist Fellowship

On the 4th of January following our morning service, we celebrated the 100th birthday of Michael Moss.



Michael is a former local preacher. Congratulations Michael!

Muriel Glithero, a member at High Street Methodist Church, Witney,

recently celebrated her 100th birthday with a party for family and friends at Bradwell Village Hall, near Burford.

Muriel, the widow of Ron Glithero, a Local Preacher for over 60 years and formerly the Head of Religious Studies, Westminster College, Oxford, was active both in church life and the community, including acting as treasurer for the Witney Citizens Advice Bureau, and volunteering and acting as treasurer for the Witney Oxfam Shop into her 70's.

Muriel enjoyed catching up with many friends at her party, and family celebrations were complete with the safe arrival of her second great-grandchild 4 days later.



Teams-4U Shoebox Appeal 2025



Since my time as Circuit Administrator, I have seen two collections of shoe boxes. It never ceases to amaze me of people's generosity and spirit of engagement with the project and the excitement of seeing the number of boxes grow each week. Have you ever wondered what happens after you deliver your box to your local church?

Below is a message from Teams-4U :

"Thank you once again for your support in last year's shoebox campaign of 2025 and as many may know Teams4u collected, checked, and exported nearly 60,000 shoeboxes which is a fantastic achievement given the current world we live in!

Boxes went out to Romania, Ukraine, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Moldova, Georgia and Belarus.

As a small thank you the link below is a short video of the shoebox distribution in Romania taken last December where some of your shoebox donations will have been handed out.

If you would like to know anything more about where the boxes went then do please get in touch" Teams-4U

<https://youtu.be/-JB7BYnOhdY>

Courses and Training Events



A Five-Day Community for Spiritual Formation
Sunday 12th–Friday 17th July 2026 – Ripon College, Cuddesdon, Oxford

Worship ~ Teaching ~ Silence ~ Reflection

with **Barbara Glasson** and **Steve Radley**

Practising Peace

How can we live as peace-makers in a disordered world?

Through a programme of worship, teaching, silence and reflection
based on a Benedictine monastic pattern

The Community for Spiritual Formation

creates transformative space for people to be in communion
with God, self, others, and creation for the sake of the world.



Barbara Glasson: Peace is an elusive concept - generally we all think it's a 'good' thing but don't really know what it is or how it might be achievable. More than this, there is always a tension between peace and justice. As a pastoral theologian, Methodist presbyter, city centre minister and college tutor I have wrestled with what peace might look like both personally, in community and global contexts. I won't be coming with answers, but in my recent book 'Peace is a Doing Word' I have explored peace as a verb, a way of being, rather than an aspirational destination. In this retreat I hope to explore this further through sharing insights and listening to the gathered community in an atmosphere of creativity and mutual learning.



Steve Radley: Research shows exposure to a threatening experience for under a second will be etched into our long-term memory. A non-threatening experience takes 15 seconds. This means our minds are drawn to the sadnesses of the world, and it becomes hard to see its beauty. Yet God's wonderful world has far more that is life-giving than life-limiting. Using contemplative photography, mindfulness, and *visio divina* we will learn to see our world in new ways: beauty is never more than a step away. This awareness provides hope, equipping us to become the peace we long to see in our world. I am a practical theology doctoral student, researching healing through photography from trauma induced moral injury. I have personal experience of mental ill-health following my war deployment as an RAF chaplain to Afghanistan and the Gulf. My ministry brings together this study and personal experience.



With opportunities to weave facilitated by Ruth Sprague: As a freestyle weaver I find the processes of spinning and weaving to be prayerful – an opportunity for conversation with God. I will be bringing a range of creative resources including weaving resources to Cuddesdon for members of the community to use as they wish. These resources are simply another way to facilitate conversation with Creator, Son and Spirit. As we independently reflect on what Barbara and Steve share with us, we also acknowledge and explore how our thoughts and experiences manifest collectively in any way God leads us.

 
 All Age Worship 

District Training Day for
Preachers & Worship Leaders



10am-3pm
Saturday 21st February 2026



at
St Andrew's Methodist Church
Harlestone Road, Northampton
NNS 6AB



Please let the District Office know if you would
like to attend, on:
office@northamptonmethodistdistrict.co.uk

CIRCUIT STEWARDS DAY

Saturday 14th February 2026
10am - 3pm

taking place at
Trinity Methodist Church
Royland Road
Loughborough, LE11 2EH



More details will follow in the new year





Methodist Women in Britain

**Swanwick Residential Weekend : 10th to 12th April 2026
at The Hayes, Swanwick, Derbyshire DE55 1AT**

“Where Power meets Purpose: Small Acts that Change the World”

with Carolyn Godfrey



Carolyn Godfrey has been the Regional Officer for Safeguarding for both the Darlington and Newcastle Districts since early 2015. Before this she worked in education and has a background in pastoral care and special needs, mostly focused in the primary sector. She feels strongly that a good safeguarding culture is central to our calling to be a growing, inclusive, evangelistic and justice seeking church.

Carolyn served as the Vice President of the Methodist Conference 2024-2025.

**Come & join us for a weekend of Faith, Fellowship & Fun
Worship & Workshops, Women Working & Wondering**

**Booking opens 5th January 2026
on our website www.mwib.org.uk**

Conference cost: £210

Book by 2nd February with £100 deposit only

Balance due by 20th March

A limited number of Bursaries are available

Bursary applications must be submitted before 3rd March

Contact: Swanwick.mwib26@gmail.com

Conference will also be on zoom – book online

BB

Volunteering

**| Do you want to make a
difference in young
people's lives?**



**We are looking for new Leaders and Helpers to work with our
1st Witney Boys' Brigade Company at High Street Methodist Church Witney.**

**We meet on Thursday evenings from 6.30 – 8pm
Juniors 8-11yrs & Company / Seniors 11-18yrs**

**All Leaders and Helpers are subject to an
enhanced DBS check and some mandatory training**

**For more information and an application form
Email – 1witney@boys-brigade.org.uk**

Wellbeing at Carterton Methodist Church

Thursday 12th February 10.30-11.30am

Guest Host

Jackie Wren

Personal Trainer to the Stars

Jacke along with her husband Mark wrote and presented 10 fitness and wellbeing DVDs with Davina McCall selling over a million copies worldwide.

Jackie is also a former British Gymnast and went on to work with the British Gymnastics coaching team

Mayor of Tandridge and local councilor

'Every person is unique and beautiful and in my own way, I want to help them to not take life too seriously and to learn to love themselves'.

Jackie Wren



Laptops for Good causes

Andrew Maisey, Local Preacher

One of the charities I volunteer with (Asylum Welcome) provides, amongst other things, refurbished laptops and/or smartphones to destitute asylum seekers; you can imagine how impossible it is to engage with the asylum process without access to the Internet/email. Stocks of donated laptops and smartphones have really fallen in the last months, and at the Friday drop ins at the Witney hotel, we are having to tell people that while they are on the list, they just need to wait; this is particularly frustrating for children at school with homework to do.

Could you ask if anyone has an old smartphone or laptop they don't need? If so, can you bring them to worship? When I am with you, I can collect them and then take them to the Asylum Welcome offices the following day as spookily, Asylum Welcome are in Magdalen Road in Oxford just down the road from The Porch where I am each Monday.

The IT team at Asylum Welcome remove all data from donated devices and install new operating systems so your data will be safely deleted (or if you prefer reset your device yourself).

I know these devices can be replaced quite often, so if anyone is stuck not knowing what to do with unneeded tech, this would really help people in the greatest need.



Homestead Cottages

The Methodist Homestead is a long-established sheltered housing charity. Set in a peaceful location near the Northampton Racecourse.

Applications are invited for one-bedroom, self contained cottages.

Visit the website Homestead Cottages | Sheltered Independent Living for Christians

Tel: The Scheme Manager Tel: 07957 623026

Email: office @homesteadcottages.org.uk

Something a little light-hearted....

How many Christians does it taketo change a light bulb?

Charismatics: Only one, hands already in the air.

Pentecostals: Ten. One to change the bulb and nine to pray against the spirit of darkness.

Presbyterians: None. Lights will go on and off at predestined times.

Roman Catholics: None. Candles only.

Baptists: At least 15. One to change the light bulb and three committees to approve the change and decide who brings the potato salad.

Episcopalians: Three. One to call the electrician, one to mix the drinks and one to talk about how much better the old one was.

Mormons: Five. One man to change the bulb and four wives to tell him how to do it.

Unitarians: We choose not to make a statement either in favour of or against the need for a light bulb. However, if in your journey you have found that light bulbs work for you that is fine. You're invited to write a poem or compose a modern dance about your light bulb for the next Sunday Service, in which we will explore a number of light bulb traditions including incandescent, fluorescent, three-way, long-life and tinted, all of which are equally valid paths to luminescence.

Methodists: Undetermined, whether your light bulb is bright or dull or completely out, you are loved. You can be a light bulb, turnip bulb or tulip bulb. Church wide lighting service is planned for Sunday. Bring a bulb of your choice and a covered dish.

Nazarene: Six. One woman to replace the bulb while five men review the church lighting policy.

Lutherans: None. Lutherans don't believe in change.

Amish: What's a light bulb?

A comment from a previous Circuit news

And finally... (provided by Chipping Norton Methodist Church)

Donald Trump arrived at the gates of heaven. God was interviewing people at the Pearly Gates to see if they were suitable to come in. 'Today' said God 'we are having a bit of an intelligence test. So here is the question, if we fill up a bathtub; then we offer you a teaspoon, a teacup and a bucket and ask you to empty the bathtub, which would you choose?

"Oh, I understand," said Donald trying to be clever. Someone like me, a reasonably clever person would use the bucket because it's bigger than the spoon or teacup.

"No", said God, "the best answer is to pull out the plug. Go to the back of the queue!"

Deadline for articles 2026

Appeal for items: As this is new it will take some time to get into the swing of things. I would very much like to hear stories connected to your church or personal testimonies, so we can share our journeys together. Also, any events or special events that your church may have held. Thank you so much to all those who contributed this time.

Because I was unexpectedly on sick /compassionate leave, it has only been possible to produce two months this time Feb/Mar. Our next edition will be Apr/Jun and the deadline for articles is:

Quarter	Deadline for copy	Publication Date
Apr-Jun	17/03/2026	01/04/2026
July-Sept	16/06/2026	01/07/2026
Oct-Dec	17/09/2026	01/10/2026

Please send to: Caroline Todd, Circuit Administrator
Email: administrator@westoxfordshiremethodists.org.uk
Tel: 01608 656768

Feedback is welcome. Remember this is the first time we have done this so it is an evolving project, please be kind.

Thank you!