



The **Methodist Church**  
West Oxfordshire Circuit

## Circuit News

April 2026



**April showers bring May flowers**

Welcome to our second edition of Circuit News. Thank you to those who contributed in some way. News stories are a little lacking this time, which is a shame as we are heading into Easter and good news is uplifting for us all.

### CIRCUIT TEAM

Revd Andrew Biggs, Superintendent Minister

Revd Sue Jacobs and Revd Kathy Flynn

Caroline Todd, Circuit Administrator

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

Tel: 01608 656768



**Sabbatical:**

Revd Andrew Biggs will be taking a 3-month planned sabbatical from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2026. Arrangements are in place to cover some of his duties. The circuit office will remain open Tues-Thursday and the Revd Sue Jacobs and The Revd Kathy Flynn will be in their respective churches, with Kathy as acting superintendent. Any further help can be made by contacting the administrator (Details above).

We wish Andrew a prayerful time for reflection, renewal and spiritual refreshment.



## **The Revd Sue Jacobs**

*Minister at: Long Hanborough, Bampton, Davenport Road  
and Minster Lovell*

Dear Friends,

As I sit down to write this, I am struck by how quickly time flows when you are surrounded by a community of grace. It feels like only yesterday that I arrived in the West Oxfordshire Circuit, filled with a mix of trepidation and excitement. Now, looking back over these past eighteen months as your Probationer Presbyter, my heart is simply full.

Ministry is often described as a series of tasks, but my experience here has taught me that it is, above all, a tapestry of relationships. You have opened your doors, your hearts, and your lives to me. Whether over a quiet cup of tea or during the shared energy of a Sunday morning, it has been my greatest privilege to be invited into your stories.

I have watched with immense joy as some of churches within my section have blossomed. Seeing the seeds of new ideas take root and witnessing the quiet, steadfast love these communities show to one another has been a profound inspiration. There is a particular kind of joy that comes from seeing people discover their gifts and watching a community grow in confidence and spirit.

While these 18 months have been a time of learning and reflecting on the depth of my calling, they have also been a season of incredible encouragement. Your patience and prayers have been the wind in my sails. This journey is now leading toward a significant milestone. It is with a sense of anticipation and great excitement that I look forward to my Ordination Service at Shrewsbury Abbey on 28th June. This service is not just a personal milestone; it is a celebration of the journey we have shared. I will carry the spirit of West Oxfordshire with me as I stand in the Abbey, knowing that I am there because of the love and formation I received in our chapels and communities.

So, thank you for being the circuit that has held me, my partners in sharing the Gospel, and my friends. As we look toward the future, I am reminded of the promise that God, who began a good work in us, will carry it on to completion.

With love and prayers,  
Rev Sue Jacobs

## A message from our Chair of District, The Revd Sonia Hicks

May God's peace be a reality for you this Easter.

Dear Beloved in Christ,

I love this time of year as we shake off the remnants of Winter and Spring beckons. It is wonderful to see the golden daffodils and the blossoms on the trees. Spring heralds warmer days, brighter mornings. There is so much that looks promising in the garden – new life is palpable.

And yet, the media is full of death, hatred, old ways of settling differences in the human family. Once again, dialogue takes second place to cluster bombs and missiles. Once again, the toxic rhetoric grows hour by hour and the voice of peace seems a mere whisper. The promise we see in nature is not echoed in our human discourses.

How bleak things must have seemed to the women hurrying to the tomb on that first Easter day! The person whom they loved and had followed faithfully had been cruelly executed. All their hopes, all their dreams had disappeared in an instant. They must have thought "Ah well, nothing will change. God has forgotten us – God has abandoned us." It is easy for us to think that too as communities are reduced to rubble and lives are torn apart in the Middle East, in Africa, and in every other conflict that rages unabated. But God had neither forgotten nor abandoned the forlorn group of women mourning the crucified Jesus. Death did not have the last word and neither does war.

Easter is a constant light as we long for a world where discourses do not always end in conflict. Where women and girls can know freedom from sexual exploitation. Where the Good News isn't an aspiration but a reality which Christians seek to nurture in their lives and in their communities. What does the Good News look like in our churches and Circuits? What does Good News mean in our workplaces and neighbourhoods? It is possible to glimpse that reality people gather to seek common ground. We can see that reality when a community lunch becomes the place of reconciliation.

I wonder if going to the tomb, on that first Easter day, was in itself more real, more in keeping with God's ways than those women could ever have imagined. A prayerful act of defiance in the face of all the cruelty of the Roman Empire and the powers that be. What does prayerful defiance look like for us?

The hope for a better world is part of the Easter message. God has not forgotten us – God, in Jesus, has not abandoned us.

When our hearts are wintry, grieving or in pain,  
Then your touch can call us back to life again,  
Fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:  
Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green.  
[STF 306 v.4 © Trustees for Methodist Purposes]

## Davenport Rd Methodist Church

Many local Christians have received this

### **INTERNATIONAL CALL TO PRAYER**

and Davenport Road invite others in the circuit to join them.

During the second world war a group of people stopped whatever they were doing at a specific time every night to pray for peace and safety for everyone. The praying was so overwhelming that bombing stopped shortly after - such was the power of prayer.

Once again, it is perhaps time to call Christians around the world to pray. An international group has agreed to spend just 1 minute every day, praying for world peace, for the end of conflict and for the restoration of calm and security for all people on earth.

The Christians in the UK are invited to stop at 3.30pm each day. 35 other countries will also be stopping at various times daily. Several of Dav Rd's prayer champions will be participating so why not join them?

Set an alarm on your phone every day at the time designated for our country and pray for just 1 minute. The power of many people praying together at the same time will be incredible. Let us try to pray at the given time.



## Circuit Services



DISTRICT ORDINAND'S  
TESTIMONY SERVICE  
6PM  
SUNDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2026

CELEBRATE WITH US THE TESTIMONY OF THE  
REV'D SUE JACOBS  
AT  
DAVENPORT ROAD METHODIST CHURCH  
WITNEY, OXFORDSHIRE OX28 6EJ

Please contact the District Office if you would like to  
attend:  
[office@northamptonmethodistdistrict.co.uk](mailto:office@northamptonmethodistdistrict.co.uk)

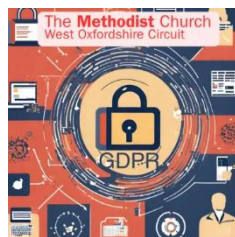


The Next Circuit Meeting will be held on:  
**Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> June**  
At Bampton Methodist Church  
Time: 7.30 pm

**Statistics for Mission**  
**URGENT**

**Has your church entered their statistics data yet?**  
**Please check and complete as a matter of urgency**

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



**GDPR Annual Checklist**

The GDPR checklist is a means to review the GDPR procedures and data held and must be completed each year by Church Councils. All our local churches, as well as the circuit itself, find themselves holding a variety of personal data including details of members and employees.

Thank you to everyone involved in this task. If you have not done this, please do so by the **end of May deadline**.

The checklist for the 2025-2026 year is now available. If you are unable to complete this please ask for help. Sarah Eason is your District Data Champion and is available for you to contact for advice. Email [gdpr@northamptonmethodistdistrict.org.uk](mailto:gdpr@northamptonmethodistdistrict.org.uk)

In the meantime if you need guidance on GDPR you can find it on the TMCP web site <https://www.t MCP.org.uk/>

The information accessible from this Data Protection page explains the obligations imposed on Managing Trustees in relation to this data under Data Protection legislation. The guidance helps Managing Trustees to identify what personal data is, how to hold it securely and for what purposes that personal data can be used.



## Davenport Road Methodist Church

For many years now (over 30 in some cases) there has been a contingent from Davenport Road attending the annual Spring Harvest inter-denominational gathering in Butlin's, Minehead. People of all ages come together to have fun and fellowship, listen to speakers, bible study, teaching and worship in many forms. This year, again, a crowd from not just Dav Rd but some other Witney churches will be there in the week after Easter.

This year the theme is "No greater life" and draws on Mark's Gospel and the discipleship vision of Deuteronomy, exploring what it looks like to follow Jesus in worship, community, mission and the everyday journey of faith. The principal bible teacher will be Andrew Ollerton from the Bible Society and the renowned speaker, Jeff Lucas will preach in the evening.

There's something for everyone. The children meet in their own groups to follow the theme at their own pace and understanding. Afternoons can be spent in seminars or using all the Butlin's facilities, such as the swimming pool, play areas, sports, fun fair or simply soaking up the beach atmosphere. Some even stay up late, experiencing the late-night activities!!!! We plan to have a lot of fun.

Please pray that we have safe travelling and can really lap up the godly ambiance as well as learn more about the amazing freedom we have as followers of Jesus.

[www.springharvest.org](http://www.springharvest.org)

**Easter Events and services in Rev Sue's section.**

**Maundy Thursday: Holy Communion at Davenport Road Methodist Church at 7.00pm.**

**Good Friday: Service at Long Hanborough Methodist Church at 10.00am**

**Easter Morning: Breakfast for all at Davenport Road at 9.00am followed by Resurrection service at 10.30am. Long Hanborough will have the District Chair, Rev Sonia Hicks at 10.00am.**

## High Street Methodist Church



**Experience Easter** has been held at High Street Methodist church, Witney, for the past 12 + years as part of its outreach mission to primary schools in Witney. **Experience** is an initiative from the diocese of Gloucester. This year, 7 schools brought some 240 Year 5 children (9 to 10-year-olds) across 4 weeks of March.

Numbers are all very well and can be impressive but can when not put into context, be meaningless. It was felt that what was more important was how the Experience affected individual children. So, this year, the leaders and volunteers listened out for comments made by the children as they experienced the last week of Jesus' life on earth. They did this by visiting, in small groups, the significant moments for Jesus of that week, culminating in the joy of Easter morning.

Moments such as the '**Hopes & Dreams**' of Palm Sunday; meeting Jesus as the '**Servant King**' as he washed his disciple's feet; sharing with Him the final meal, with the request to '**Remember Me**' being made by Him; being with Him in the Garden of Gethsemane and feeling '**Alone**': sitting at the foot of the cross to '**Share our Suffering**' before gathering outside the tomb for the '**Resurrection**' and discovering that 'Jesus is Alive'.

The children were asked to wonder about the emotions that may have been felt by the women and the disciples on discovering the empty tomb, on that Easter morning. They were invited to offer appropriate words to describe these emotions.

This was followed by wondering why eggs are given at Easter. In one final session, one child remarked that "**eggs crack and if you crack things, good things can come out**".

Each area of **Experience** provides an opportunity for wondering, engaging, doing and reflecting. Whilst looking at a picture of Jesus washing feet as the **Servant King**, one observant child said they felt that Peter was protesting, trying to stop Jesus from washing his feet, by holding up his hands.

A comment made by a girl in the **Sharing our Suffering** corner, when talking about the suffering of Jesus, and the crucifixion said, "it was a bittersweet moment". At the cross, the activity is to remember the suffering in the world in the present day. The children were invited to offer brief prepared prayers. One boy, believed to be from a Muslim family, asked "will saying this prayer turn me into a Christian?" He was reassured by the leader that "it's not like that", the leader offering to read the prayer for him so he didn't feel under pressure.

Musings from the **Alone** corner where the children were making small clay pots and thinking about putting their fears into the pots to entrust them to God, one girl said that she'd felt very peaceful while doing this. Another said that she felt God was close by, whilst a third girl was making a deep pot because as she told the leader, "God's love is very deep".

The Team found sharing and reflecting on the insights from the children, very productive, recognising what a privilege it is to be able to share this ministry with the children. They are looking forward to continuing the story with *Experience Pentecost* in May/June with the same children.

If you would like more information, contact Revd. Brenda Woods, [brendaewoods@gmail.com](mailto:brendaewoods@gmail.com)

## High Street Methodist Church

### Holy Week at Witney High Street Methodist Church

Join us for a series of reflective services during Holy Week:

- **Tuesday 31 March, 10:00am** – Meditation
- **Wednesday 1 April, 7:30pm** – WICS Easter Cantata
- **Thursday 2 April, 7:30pm** – Maundy Communion
- **Friday 3 April, 10:00am** – Good Friday Worship

All are warmly welcome.

## Chipping Norton Methodist Church

Chipping Norton will be holding a Spring lunch with sales tables, raising funds for the church, on:

**Saturday April 25<sup>th</sup>**

**Time: 12-2pm**

Lunches (soup and roll, sausage or bacon sandwiches) from 12 - 1.30 with stalls (cakes, plants nearly new and books)

Wednesday May 6th coffee morning for Christian Aid followed by a soup lunch. Everyone welcome.

### 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.

Contact: Elaine Parsons

## Wednesday Coffee Mornings

09.30 – 11.30 am

1<sup>st</sup> Weds of each month is a charity coffee morning

Pop in for a cuppa and chat. Cake stall, bric-a-brac, books and more. All to raise funds for church.

## Chipping Norton Singing Group



At Chipping Norton Methodist Church, we have a singing group that meets fortnightly in the church. We sing a variety of music in services and a summer concert. We are a very mixed group and anyone regardless of musicality is invited. The only request is that you enjoy singing! We meet on the first and third Tuesdays of the month at 7.30pm.

Our summer concert evening is on Saturday June 27<sup>th</sup> and we would love to see some friends from the circuit.

Carol English

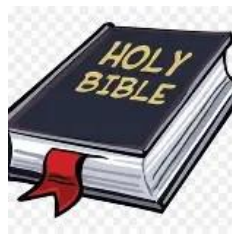
## Minster Lovell Methodist Church

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 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](mailto:dawn.haley8@gmail.com)



## Meet Sonia Duraturo, Lay Chaplain

### Hi, I'm Sonia, the chaplain lead for Town Chaplains!

Town Chaplains (TCs) have been running for about 3 years after the then minister at the High Street Methodist Church, Rev Jason Cooke, had a dream to see chaplains from different churches coming together to reach the town centre. There was so much need and hopelessness in Witney, and we wanted to be the hands and feet of Jesus. We currently have 14 people on the team from 5 churches across the town, and we go out in pairs during the week to love the last, the lost, and the lonely.

We have seen the homeless lifted from the cold streets, the hungry fed, and the Gospel preached to those who seek to hear it. It is a ministry of presence, and our hope is that people see Jesus walking about the town when they see us!

It is a real honour to lead this team of fully surrendered disciples of Christ and to reach those in need.

**Sonia.**

✠ You are warmly invited to a ✠  
**Retreat & Bible Study**  
**led by Rev'd Richard Andrew**  
President of the Methodist Conference 2025-26  
**18th April 2026**  
**10am - 3pm**  
taking place at  
**Thornborough Methodist Church**  
The Green, Thornborough,  
MK18 2DL  
This will also be on Zoom  
Please contact the District Office if you would like to  
attend:  
[office@northamptonmethodistdistrict.co.uk](mailto:office@northamptonmethodistdistrict.co.uk)

## 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](mailto:office@homesteadcottages.org.uk)

## New Service for Chipping Norton

**Hi, I'm Katrina,**  
your local area coordinator  
for Chipping Norton.

**Speak to me**  
about what you're  
finding challenging.  
Together we'll find  
a way forward.

A new, community-based  
approach in **Chipping Norton**  
will connect people, groups and  
organisations across our local  
area and the wider county.

You may be facing financial, relationship or health challenges, you might want to get involved in groups or activities or feel you struggle to get your voice heard.

You might feel it's difficult to take that first step.

Whoever you are, I can help you join the dots and find and access the support you need.

- You don't need an official referral - just get in touch and I'll see how I can help.
- I am based locally so can meet wherever is best for you.
- I can help you build connections in your community, helping you plan for a happier future.
- You'll be in control - we'll move forward at a pace that suits you.

## And finally...

*Did you know, the world's largest Easter egg:*

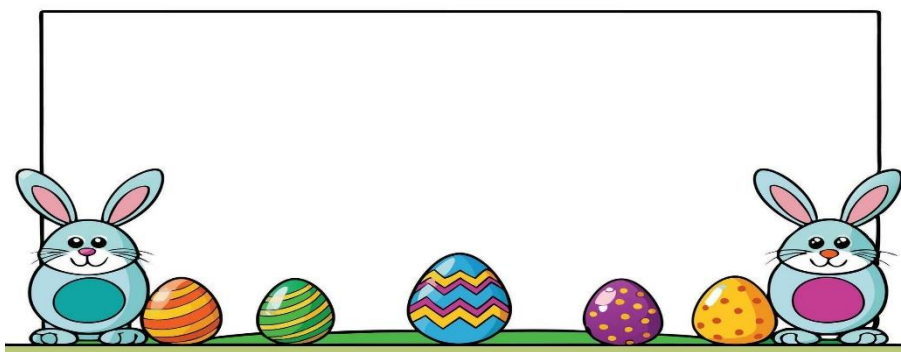
*Stands at 31 feet tall and 18 feet wide and can be found in Canada, it weighs 5,000 lbs and took 1200 hours to construct.*

# Easter Family Quiz

Answers on last page

## Spring / Easter Trivia Quiz (Just for fun)

1. What animal delivers Easter eggs on Easter Sunday
2. What goes on the top of a Simnel cake and how many?
3. Who is always late in Alice in Wonderland?
4. "It's not Terry's, It's mine!" is the advertising slogan for which chocolate treat?
5. When are Hot Cross buns traditionally eaten?
6. What is the traditional flower of Easter?
7. Which country started the tradition of the Easter Bunny?
8. Where is Easter Island?
9. In Switzerland, what animal delivers Easter eggs to Children?
10. Who betrayed Jesus just before his crucifixion?
11. Which country grows the most daffodils?
12. What is Bambi's best friend called?
13. What is the name of a male rabbit called?
14. What is the name of the jeweller who decorated Easter eggs for royalty?
15. Judy Garland and Fred Astaire starred in which 1948 springtime film?



## Deadline for articles 2026

**Appeal for items:** 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, for example significant birthday celebrations. These will take priority over coffee morning events as we work to reduce the number of pages in future.

Thank you so much to all those who contributed this time and do keep in touch. See dates below.

Please send to: Caroline Todd, Circuit Administrator

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

Tel: 01608 656768

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

## Answers to the Quiz....



- 1) Easter Bunny
- 2) Marzipan balls – Qty 11
- 3) The White Rabbit
- 4) Chocolate Orange
- 5) Good Friday
- 6) White lillies
- 7) Germany
- 8) The S.E Pacific
- 9) The Easter Cuckoo
- 10) Judas
- 11) The UK
- 12) Thumper
- 13) A Buck
- 14) Peter Karl Faberge
- 15) Easter Parade