



CIRCUIT NEWSLETTER

Welcome back to our Circuit Newsletter.

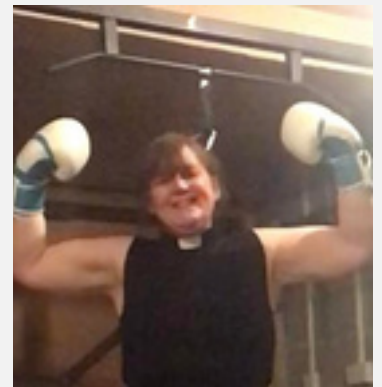
CIRCUIT TEAM



REV'D ANDREW BIGGS



REV'D SUE JACOBS



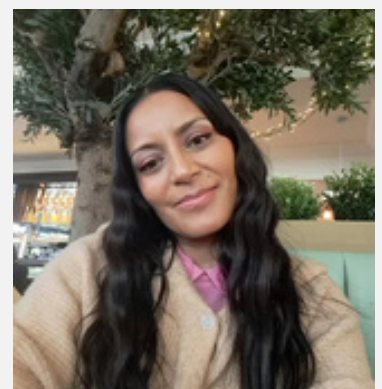
REV'D KATHY FLYNN



REVD MOLLY
CHITOKWINDO



CAROLINE TODD



SONIA DURATURO

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



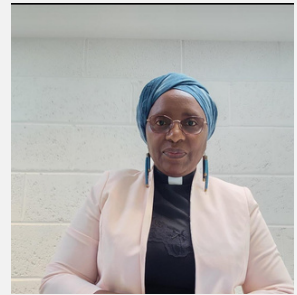
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01608 656768

CIRCUIT NEWS

Welcome Revd Molly Minister for High Street Methodist Church and Faringdon



Hello,

I'm Rev'd Molly Chitokwindo, and I am delighted and grateful to be part of the West Oxfordshire Methodist Circuit. I am married to Allen Zvikomborero Chidziya, and we are blessed with two daughters, Kunashe and Sheanopa. Their Shona names tell a beautiful story: Kunashe means "There is a God" and Sheanopa means "God gives" together, their names form the sentence, "There is a God who gives." That is a reminder to our family of God's goodness and generosity.

Allen and I love being outdoors and especially enjoy mountain climbing. Allen has climbed Mount Snowdon five times, I have climbed it three times and Sheanopa twice. I have also climbed Ben Nevis once on my own while Allen was playing in his squash league in Walsall! Both our girls played sport growing up, with both enjoying netball and Kunashe also playing table tennis. University life has now taken them away from their sporting activities, but we still enjoy being active as a family whenever we can.

I have been a Methodist minister for many years, and my journey of faith and ministry began in my teenage years in Zimbabwe. From the beginning, I found myself drawn towards people, community, justice and those who are often overlooked or on the margins. My ministry has taken me through many different communities and experiences, including prison ministry, work with vulnerable communities, refugee and migrant communities, multi-faith work and supporting people who have found themselves displaced or in need of a safe place to belong.

Continued

CIRCUIT NEWS

At the heart of who I am, I have always believed that church is not simply a place we come to, but a community we build together and take out into the world.

At the heart of my ministry is a very simple belief: love must be lived, not just preached, sung or talked about. I believe every person is created and loved by God, and I want my ministry to help create communities where people are welcomed, valued, heard and able to discover their gifts and their place in God's story. I love being with people, listening to their stories and discovering the gifts and richness that each person brings. I believe every person is precious and valued by God, and I want my ministry to help create communities where people know that they belong, are welcomed, and are loved.

Prayer is one of the pillars of my life and ministry. My prayer is that my life will speak about Christ Jesus even before I have spoken a word. My passion is to build communities that reflect Jesus communities of love, compassion, welcome, justice and hope, where people can encounter something of God's love through the way we live and care for one another.

I am excited about what God is already doing across the West Oxfordshire Circuit and grateful for the opportunity to join in. I look forward to getting to know you, sharing in your joys and challenges, and discovering together where God is calling us next.

It is a real privilege to be here, and I give thanks to God for bringing me to this new chapter of ministry. I look forward to meeting you all!

Revd Molly's welcome service will be held on Sunday 18th October at 4.00pm at High Street Methodist Church, Witney

CIRCUIT NEWS

Our Communitiies in Crisis by Caroline Todd

“We plough the fields and scatter..
the good seed on the land...
but it is fed and watered...
by God’s almighty hand”

The opening verse of probably the most well know hymn of German origin, sung in celebration of an important festival for churches, Harvest. A time when we give thanks to farmers for their care of the land they farm, and those who deliver food to our tables. A special time of reflection across our churches and an opportunity to be generous in our giving. This year farmers have yet again struggled with the elements, flooding and extreme heat leaving the future of farming in doubt. Where many farmers are being forced to consider diversification which in many cases has become necessary for survival.

We are blessed in the West Oxfordshire Circuit to be surrounded by an abundance of beauty as our ever-changing seasons in fields and farmland produce crops as well as managing livestock all for local consumption. However, despite what may be seen as affluence, underlies a cry from communities in crisis. However, the good news is, there is help available.

I want to focus on Foodbanks, a topic close to my heart that has connections with Harvest Festivals. They are a source of support to communities offering practical and emotional support to vulnerable people in need of a top-up for ordinary cost of living basics we all take for granted. Hunger is a real issue, and every foodbank strives to fulfil that need as nobody deserves to go hungry. Many churches have opted to give their harvest gifts to local foodbanks and that could not be more fitting.

More people than ever are being driven to food banks and the sharp increase in people needing help is on the up. In addition to that support, there has been an increase in the number of resource hubs that support foodbanks in different ways, community fridges for example are becoming very popular. Many clients are extremely grateful and see it as an absolute lifeline.

Although not in the West Oxfordshire circuit, I share this statistic as I am a volunteer at Bicester Foodbank where 2025 figures show 3582 emergency food parcels were distributed, 602 households were supported and 46% were households with one or more children. A staggering statistic and one that is growing each year. This is replicated over many foodbanks nationwide. Why not look up your local foodbank to see how you can support them. To find a foodbank near you visit the Trussell website <https://www.trussell.org.uk>

You can also find a list of items needed.

Witney has a thriving foodbank but there are many others, not all Trussell Foodbanks, which need and would welcome your continuing support. There is also an active foodbank in Chipping Norton, for example, one of many in the area.

Foodbanks run by Trussell, require a food voucher, which can be obtained from any community organisation such as housing associations, GPs and citizen's advice, which can then be exchanged for a food parcel at a foodbank locally.



CHIPPING NORTON METHODIST CHURCH HARVEST

We held a successful and enjoyable all age worship harvest service led by David Sarbutts, we followed the service with an auction of fresh goods, with the money going to "All we can" and the cans and dried goods all went to Chipping Norton food bank, then shared a lunch together.

We are planning to celebrate the start of Advent, with Adfest 28th and 29th November 2026, a weekend of singing, crafts story telling etc in church and in the church hall we shall have an ongoing Christmas bazaar and cafe serving cakes, light lunches etc. We are planning a Community Nativity and are asking folks to make a Nativity figure, no taller than 8 inches, and bring it along during the weekend. We shall end with our Advent Church service at 4.00 pm, everyone welcome.

HARVEST AT WESTCOTE

Our Harvest Thanksgiving Service and Harvest Lunch in support of World Vision and Tearfund Child Sponsorship Schemes, were well supported.

About 30 of us gathered in chapel and 40 in the Village Hall for lunch. The sum of £420 was raised which was amazing. In addition to that we have collected a good number of items to take to the North Cotswold Foodbank.

HARVEST AT BAMPTON

September 20th was Bampton's Harvest Festival which was led by the Rev. Sue Jacobs. This was followed by magnificent lunch prepared by Lynne, one of our members. There followed a collection in aid of All We Can and this raised the sum of £140.00. Gifts from the harvest table were distributed to The Community Shop in Aston, The Cooperative Stores on Madeley Park and the hand car washers on the A40.

CIRCUIT NEWS

Former Burford School teacher Raymond Moody dies at 97

It was with great sadness that we heard of the death of the former BGS and Burford School teacher Raymond Moody. He passed away peacefully on 19th August 2026, aged 97.

Raymond came to Burford in 1960, teaching Chemistry and Religious Education (RE) and was also Chaplain to the Boarding House in the early years. He later became Head of RE and also taught Latin working alongside his wife Joan, whom he had married in 1955.

He then served as Mayor of Burford between 1985 and 1991 and was described as 'One of those rare individuals who never took but always gave!' He is survived by his wife Joan, children Nick, Jeremy and Clare and five grandchildren.

He will be sadly missed but his legacy lives on.

From the Oxfordshire Local History Association newsletter October 2026:

“Teacher at Burford Grammar School, Reverend, author and local historian, Raymond added so much to the life of Burford. The research he carried out, with his wife Joan, has left us with an unmatched history of the town. Raymond worked closely with the Victoria County History and would always give freely of his knowledge. He was a man who always gave and never took, and he will be sorely missed.”

Read a fuller tribute in the newsletter of the Burford Tolsey Museum & Archive.

Raymond Moody's memorial service will be on Friday 16 October at 11am, St John the Baptist Church, Church Green, Burford.

CIRCUIT NEWS

A Plea from our Circuit Treasurer

In February 2008 I was asked by our Superintendent Minister if I would consider undertaking the role of Circuit Treasurer from the following September. As I was due to retire from my full-time job in the following June, and after careful consideration, I agreed – little thinking that I would still be doing the job 18 years later. In fact, I feel that the Church should really ensure that nobody is expected to undertake any position for so long.

Having reached my eighties a few years ago, I indicated to the June 2025 Circuit Meeting that I needed to finish in November of that year. Unfortunately, the one person who had offered to take over was unable to do so. – And here I am! I really must finish before the end of 2026, to enable me to be a better husband, father and grandfather.

We have taken some of the more time-consuming jobs out of the role of Treasurer – or Circuit Finance Steward, as it is to be called. Our Circuit Administrator, Caroline deals with the every-day payments, using CAF Bank's online system, and the accountancy firm Solutions in Accounting, run by Tony Holliday, is dealing with the bookkeeping and accounts preparation.

PLEASE HELP TO FIND SOMEONE TO SET ME FREE!

Many thanks and God bless you.

Eddie.

Circuit Finance Steward

Urgently required

Voluntary Role

Please contact: Revd Andrew Biggs, Superintendent Minister

Telephone: 01608 544362

Mobile: 07968798317

Email:

superintendent@westoxfordshiremethodists.org.uk

Click here to see role description.



The **Methodist** Church
West Oxfordshire Circuit

NEWS ACROSS THE CHURCHES



Bampton Methodist Church

Bampton Methodist Church were pleased to receive notification that their request of £500.00 for internet connection costs for the year and £23.00 for an extra computer stand had been granted by Bampton Community Shop. The money for the internet will allow the morning service and other events to be live streamed to people unable to get to the Chapel.

NEWS ACROSS THE CHURCHES

Summer at Davenport Rd Methodist Church

Not just a HOT summer but a chance to praise God for His Goodness

At the beginning of July many of Dav Rd and their friends had the chance to come together to celebrate the Girls' Brigade Awards and Strawberry Tea evening. Due to the inordinate heat the evening had to be moved to a later date but it was a wonderful evening when most of the girls came together to serve us with a wonderful tea and they in their turn received awards for dedication, their contributions to GB evenings and tell us of the fun they have each week. GB really appreciated the many from church who came along to support their fundraiser for Girls' Brigade, England and Wales. This is the charity that runs and resources Girls' Brigade companies across the country. It's reserves since COVID have dwindled so they are seeking to offer support to those less fortunate.

We can give God thanks for the amazing result of over £400. Thank you all. During August and September we had the chance to get together socially with other churches in the Circuit and area as firstly we held a Grand Barbecue and Games evening and then, this month, a Quiz Night. Not only were these great fun but we made many new friends from our local section.

In August, Dav Rd and Long Hanborough yet again worshipped together. This was our third opportunity to meet in each other's churches to raise our voices share in communion and feel God's presence amongst us. Just singing these words – "All my life you have been faithful" reminded us of the goodness of God in our lives.

September 6th saw the start of the new Methodist year. During our morning service, where we were joined by many members of High Street, we were thrilled to welcome 5 new members. 3 of our younger members were confirmed and along with 2 others by transfers, were received into full membership at Davenport Road. WE pray they may be richly blessed in all they do and continue to walk closely with the Lord. Praise God for yet more goodness.

NEWS ACROSS THE CHURCHES

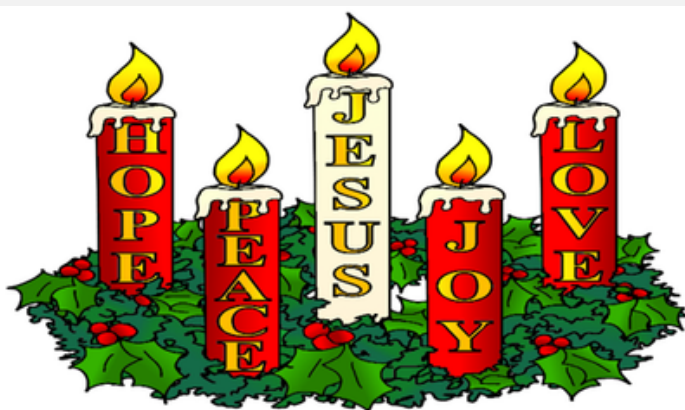
CHIPPING NORTON and WIGGINTON METHODIST CHURCHES ADFEST 2026

A festival to celebrate the start of Advent

November 28-29

A WEEKEND OF CRAFTS, STORIES, SINGING, CHRISTMAS BAZAAR CAFÉ
AND CAKES
AND MUCH MORE

CHIPPING NORTON METHODIST CHURCH
OX7 5LH
ENTRY: FREE



Christian bookshop, Witney

The Christian bookshop in Witney has sadly closed its doors.

NEWS ACROSS THE CHURCHES

Teams-4U Shoebox Appeal 2026



Collections of shoe boxes continues to create excitement and 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. Churches are collecting now. High Street, Witney and Chipping Norton are just two I know of. Contact your local church to find out more. Collections will need to be made early, usually 2nd week in November. Please ask. Some churches can also provide empty shoe boxes to fill.

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. We look forward to seeing 2026's statistics . THANK YOU EVERYONE!

Details can be found in local churches.

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>

Lunchtime Recitals

Witney High Street Methodist Church

Thursday 29th October

12.30 - 1.30, FREE ENTRY



Blackbird: Jennifer Raven (flute)



Le Merle Noir (Messiaen)



with songs, poetry and piano about other birds

Annabel Molyneaux (mezzo), Paul Molyneaux (poetry)

And Peter Cowdrey (piano)

December 10th: Rupert Compston - a recital of organ music

Lunchtime Recitals, Witney High Street

This is one of three or four concerts taking place in the year at Witney High Street Methodist Church as part of the Church's community offerings. The concerts are free and programmes are available at the door, with the opportunity to make a donation to enable the work to continue. They are organised by a group of musical friends, usually with one or more other professional musicians taking part. Start time is at 12:30pm and the concerts last for approximately 1 - 1 ½ hours. They usually have a theme, with piano, song, often poetry or prose readings, and other instrumentalists when planned. I have been attending for several years now and have always found the concerts worth going to and interesting.

The visiting soloist in the autumn Lunchtime Recital, on Thursday 29th October, is Jennifer Raven, a very popular flautist who has performed for us several times.

The title of the recital is 'Blackbird' and it includes 'Le Merle Noir' by Messiaen, along with other music about birds including songs, and poetry.

The final performance for this year is a Recital of Organ Music on December 10th, with Rupert Compston (who has been, amongst other things, a Cambridge organ scholar)

There will be a short AGM after the recital on 29th October, when we will hear something about Lunchtime Recitals, which is a small charity (the AGMs are usually finished within 15 minutes)

There tends to be an audience of between 30 and 50, but it would be great if others could find it something interesting to do during the lunchtime!

Eddie Fowler.

Updated 14.10.26

Copy Deadlines for Circuit Newsletter 2026/7

Deadline for copy – Publication

Nov-Dec 17/11/2026 (Pub 13/11/2026) Advent/Christmas

January - No Newsletter

Feb-Mar 02/02/2027 (Pub 26/01/2027) Lent/Easter

Apr-May 01/04/2027 (Pub 25/03/2027)

Jun-July 01/06/2027 (Pub 25/05/2027)

August No Newsletter

- -

Sept-Oct 01/09/2027 (Pub 24/08/2027)

New Connexional year

Nov-Dec 02/11/2027 (Pub) 26/10/2027

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

Advertise your church events, share good news stories
and much more