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Preaching Plan

The Spring 2022 Quarter preaching plan covering the period March, April and May, has been published.

A copy has been sent by email to those on our distribution lists.

The plan can be found on the circuit website and details of all services and preachers are available on the website in the services section.

SPRING 2022 PASTORAL LETTER

Dear Sisters and Brothers,



All are welcome,
All are welcome,
All are welcome in this place.
Singing the Faith 409

It is hard to disagree with these words in the hymn written by Marty Haugen. For Methodists whose core conviction is that God's love can reach out to and transform the lives of every human being without exception, the commitment to being an "Inclusive Church" is a part of our DNA. We believe that all are created in God's image and all are one in Jesus Christ.

We have a long history of advocating for social justice and challenging injustice. The first women presbyters were ordained in 1974, a year before the Sex Discrimination Act (1975) was passed. The Conference first passed resolutions on racial justice in 1962, long before the introduction of the Race Relations Act (1976).

As a Church we have made significant progress across all protected characteristics as stated under the Equalities Act 2010 and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. However, today the issue of race, sexuality, gender and disability discrimination is still a major challenge for the Church. In becoming an "Inclusive Church" where all are truly welcome there will need to be a significant transformation, which will include organisational, structural and cultural changes.

Another Methodist characteristic is that we want to do better because we know that we have got it wrong too often. We know that with the help of God's Spirit we can become more Christ-like in our relationships. In working towards being an "Inclusive Church" that means recognising that issues of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion cannot be another optional item on a busy agenda but need to be an integral part of our life together.

What is an "Inclusive Church"? Here is a possible definition for the Methodist Church.

- Welcomes in safety all who wish to be part of the life of the Church whether through worship, learning and caring, service or evangelism.
- Upholds the discipline of the Methodist Church in the face of discrimination, rejecting and resisting all behaviours which are discriminatory or belittling.
- Celebrates diversity in the variety of God's creation.
- Represents the diversity of the Methodist Church throughout its life and structures and affirms that there is no place for discrimination in our processes of selection, discernment and appointment.

I encourage all the churches in the Circuit to consider registering with the Inclusive Church network (**Inclusive Church (inclusive-church.org)**) as a way of expressing commitment to working towards being places "where love can dwell and all can safely live." (StF 409)

Rev'd John Hellyer

Ethical Pye!



Saturday 26 February 2022

A second opportunity to join with Revd Dr Jonathan Pye to consider how ethical principles apply in practice. Jonathan will explore contemporary issues in what will be a fascinating session. More details to follow.

SUSTAINABILITY FESTIVAL

The environmental group 'From the Ground Up' are organising a Festival of Sustainability at St Philips and St James' (Pip and Jims) in Leckhampton, Cheltenham on Saturday 12th February.

They have a good number of exhibitors and speakers for the day, so there will be something of interest for everyone.

More information is available on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ftgu.festival/>



Church Planting Intensive

Residential event: Cliff College, 4—6 February 2022 (then monthly online)

We are keen to equip our pioneers and planters. A key part of this is the launch of the Church Planting Intensive. The Church Planting Intensive is a fully-funded year-long hybrid course. It begins with a residential at Cliff College 4-6 February 2022 and then we meet online each month on the 1st Thursday between 7-9pm.

The course will be a mix of teaching and reflection, times of prayer and deepening our calls, a place to celebrate and be vulnerable, growth as individuals and of the projects we are passionate about. It is going to be a wonderful journey together! If you would like to join this years cohort please fill in the form via this link to register your interest. Places are limited to 40, so get in quick if you are interested.



If you have any queries please email pioneering@methodistchurch.org.uk



How is your community celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee later this year? This historic anniversary is a chance to be church at the heart of our communities, to bring neighbourhoods together for a joyful celebration.

[Take a look at our resources](#) and share your plans with us.

Diversity and the Church

St Mark's Café Church, held on Sunday 9 January with Revd Rachel Leather and Andy Rickell, discussed what churches could be doing to be truly welcoming and inclusive to everyone. This service was recorded and is now available to view on Facebook here: [St Mark's Methodist Church, Cheltenham | Facebook](#)

Change of email address

David Bennett (Local Preacher) has a new email address. Please contact him at davidjohnbennett@hotmail.com from now on and delete any previous address held. Unfortunately David will not be able to access any emails sent to any other email address from the end of January.

Circuit Website

The circuit website is undergoing a refresh! The website will be unavailable between Monday 7 and Thursday 10 February while we switch over to a new look template.

Further work, to add more content, will be undertaken after this to make the website and material more easily accessible to everyone.

VACANCY - SOCIAL & CLIMATE JUSTICE PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Andy Rickell will be coming to the end of his term of office as the Social and Climate Justice Portfolio Holder next August and we will need to recruit a successor. If you are interested in this role please send your expression of interest to Revd John Hellyer by 31 January 2022.

ROLE TITLE

Social and Climate Justice Portfolio Holder

PURPOSE

To encourage, support, advise and inform the Circuit on matters of social, economic and environmental justice.

Main Tasks

- Prepare reports for Circuit Executive and Assembly as required.
- Ensure the Social and Climate Justice team is established and meeting.
- Convene and chair the Social and Climate Justice group as appropriate or appoint a chair.
- With the Social and Climate Justice team, to oversee on behalf of the Circuit, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and EcoChurch and Climate Emergency elements of the Circuit's Mission Plan.
- Maintain an interest in current events and issues in the news.
- Keep up to date with the Circuit, connexional policies and Methodist Conference decisions on current events as appropriate.
- Maintain an overview of multi-faith activities in the County.
- Ensure the appointment of, and encouragement of, an Inter-Faith Officer who will be responsible for informing and advising the Circuit on issues to do with other faiths and relationships between different faiths.

POSSIBLE TASKS

POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES

- To organise agreed projects or activities in connection with this area of work and/or disseminate information.
- Explore channels to allow different perspectives to be heard in areas such as social, economic and environmental integrity and to maintain creatively the tensions created.
- To develop initiatives as requested by the Circuit Assembly and Executive or arising from the Social and Climate Justice team.

REPORTING TO

Circuit Assembly, The Circuit Executive, Superintendent Minister

RESPONSIBILITY FOR OTHERS

The person will not have any formal management or supervisory responsibilities.

RELATIONSHIPS

INTERNAL (THE CIRCUIT)

Inter-faith Officer

Social Justice Officer

Climate Justice Officer

Public Issues Officer

Disability Advisor

District EDI Officer

EXTERNAL (WIDER CHURCH AND COMMUNITY)

The appropriate officers in the Bristol Methodist District.

The connexional Joint Public Issues Team

VACANCY - SOCIAL & CLIMATE JUSTICE PORTFOLIO HOLDER (CONT)

MEETINGS TO ATTEND

Circuit Executive (at least 3 time per year.)

Circuit Assembly (3 times per year.)

Circuit Social and Climate Justice Group

TIME COMMITMENT

As far as possible the hours required will be flexible to suit the person appointed but some work will entail deadlines imposed by the Methodist Church and that fit the calendar of Circuit events.

SUPPORT

Support will be given by the Superintendent.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

- The person appointed will need access to a computer capable of using Microsoft Office 365.
- High speed internet connection.
- Access to telephone.

EXPENSE

- Travel expenses will be paid at the agreed connexional rate for volunteers.
- Receipted expenses agreed in advance with the person in support, necessarily incurred in the performance of the duties, will be reimbursed.
- Any agreed training costs.

REVIEW PROCEDURE

This role is subject to annual appointment by the Circuit Assembly. Appointments will not normally be renewed after six successive years.

SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

ESSENTIAL

- Recent active engagement in one or more of the issues related to the portfolio.
- Membership of a Methodist Church (or Ecumenical Partnership) in the Gloucestershire Circuit.
- Commitment to serving the Circuit within the framework of its agreed Mission Plan.
- Commitment to collaborative, team working.
- Ability to communicate effectively in writing and verbally.
- Effective administration skills.

SAFEGUARDING AND SAFER RECRUITMENT

This appointment will be subject to the Circuit Safer Recruitment policy.

2021 STATISTICS COLLECTION

The Methodist Church Online site is now open for the 2021 statistics collection.

Due to the present circumstances we are not collecting attendance data; all that is needed is the current membership figure and the in-year movements (such as office holders and pastoral contacts).

Further information can be found at:

Forms and guidance: www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/statistics-for-mission/online-data-entry/

Frequently Asked Questions: www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/statistics-for-mission/faqs/

The data entry site will be open until 31 January 2022

SPECTRUM CONFERENCE

The next conference will focus on peace and justice issues and will be held between Monday 16 and Wednesday 18 May at Yarnfield Park in Stone, Staffs.

Speakers will be Rev'd Simon Sutcliffe (Theological Educator, Queen's Foundation Edinburgh) and Professor Anthony Reddie (Professor of Theological Ethics and Fellow of Wesley House).

The cost of the conference will be £240 for full board.

More information can be obtained from Pat Anning at patricia.anning@hotmail.co.uk



WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? WHAT MIGHT MISSION LOOK LIKE POST-COVID?

10am—3pm Saturday 12 March 2022

An opportunity to meet locally and connect regionally as the South West Methodist Region to think together about how the Church comes out of Covid.

Keynote Speaker – Gary Hopkins

Ministry Development Officer for the Methodist Church

Workshops to be led by a variety of people from across the Region, with creative and inspiring stories and ideas.

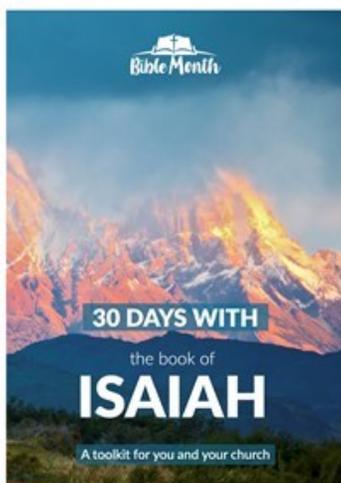
This will be a linked event from Plymouth Central Hall, but linking also to venues in Bristol and Cornwall Districts. We are excited to see faces and input from across the region as we all explore what mission looks like - and what's next for our church communities!

For further details please contact Bridget at downb@methodistchurch.org.uk

BIBLE MONTH 2022

IN 2022, WE'RE GOING TO FEAST UPON THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

Isaiah is a highly significant book that sits right at the centre of the Bible – not only in terms of where it appears, but in terms of its theological significance. It encapsulates the core strands of the Old Testament, summarising the story and struggles of Israel, and proclaiming God's plans and promises for its people. It is also referenced again and again by the New Testament writers who are eager to demonstrate that Jesus and the early Church can be seen as the fulfilment of those plans and promises. In short, it is one of the best texts for helping us to trace a story-arc through the whole Bible; hear God's heart for God's people, appreciate what the writers of the New Testament are saying, and reflect on who Jesus is and who we are called to be as the Church today. For more information: [Bible Month \(methodist.org.uk\)](http://BibleMonth(methodist.org.uk))



Local Preachers and Worship Leaders Meeting

The meeting scheduled for 2 March has been changed due to Advance Safeguarding Module training taking place at that time. The meeting will now be held on **Thursday 10 March**.

Online Foundation & Foundation Refresher Safeguarding Training Courses - 2022

I estimate that there are about 150 volunteers in our Circuit who should be participating in a Foundation/Refresher Course at this present time. It is unlikely that the Circuit can organise face-to-face training before the Summer. If you need Foundation level training you may like to consider attending an online course organised by the Methodist Church South-West Region Learning Network. If this is you and you are confident with computers and can use zoom facilities, please register for a training course as soon as possible.

Creating Safer Space



Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults

ONLINE: Foundation Module – Creating Safer Space

- 8 February 2022 7pm www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/copy-of-methodist-foundation-module-safeguarding-creating-space-registration-159103780691
- 12 May 2022 9:30am www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/methodist-foundation-module-safeguarding-creating-space-registration-159103937159

For all enquiries, please contact Bridget Down, Learning Network E: downb@methodistchurch.org.uk

Online Advance Level Safeguarding Training Courses - 2022

There is a new system in place in which I have to register all applicants with South West Learning Network for Online Advance Level Training. I have this week registered 36 applicant for this course and a further 20 people are waiting for face-to-face training to re-commence.

On registration to the on-line learning platform, delegates will be given the booking link to sign off your learning journey at the relevant gathered session. Please note you cannot attend a gathered session until you have completed all of the online modules. For online participants, you might like to note the dates of the future gathered sessions to give you a date to work to:-

- 10 February – Advanced Gathered Session – 9.30am
- 2 March – Advanced Gathered Session – 7pm
- 16 May – Advanced Gathered Session – 7pm

Peter Gardner - Circuit Safeguarding Officer E: safeguarding@gloscircuit.co.uk



Would you like to train as a Mental Health First Aider?

This is a vital skill to support people in these challenging times.

Four online courses are on offer - each with four sessions plus a need to complete self learning at home for which materials will be provided.

Course A - 15,17,22,24 March 09:30-12:00

Course B - 29,31 March, 5,7 April 12:30-15:00

Course C - 26,28 April, 3,5 May 12:30-15:00

Course D - 21,23,28,30 June 09:30-12:00

Places will be limited to 16 per course.

Cost will be £50 per person (payable with booking and non-refundable) - this is being heavily subsidised from the £300 per person fee usually charged by MHFA England. Bookings will open in the New Year.



Hucclecote's Nativity

Hucclecote Methodist Church originally created this nativity after a suggestion from one of their members. Last year an angel and flock of sheep were added following lots of positive comments from the community.

Some very generous donations and grants allowed Hucclecote to install outdoor sockets and cables for the installation.

The beautiful nativity is situated on a patch of land next to the church, on a busy crossroads, making it clearly visible to as many people as possible.

Outreach Worker

at

Midsomer Norton Methodist Church

17 hours per week for 2.3 years
(Flexible hours, including some evenings and weekends)

This is an exciting opportunity for someone who has a passion to share their Christian faith.

We are looking for an enthusiastic and approachable Outreach Worker to work with people of all ages and circumstances in leading our outreach work within the church, in the community and through our social media presence.

Salary: £9,282 per annum.

Location: The post holder will be based at the church building but can also work locally from home.

Interested? For an application pack or informal chat contact Rev Stephen Robinson - msnminister@btinternet.com or 01761 402755.

Closing Date: Monday 31st January 2022, 5pm.

Interviews are expected to be held the week beginning 14th February 2022. Start date will be by agreement.

There is a genuine occupational requirement for the post holder to be a practising Christian. The post will be offered subject to an enhanced DBS check and satisfactory references.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY...

Tuesday 25 January	9.30am	Circuit Executive
Monday 31 January		Deadline for Statistics for Mission returns
Thursday 3 February	9.30am	Manse Group
Tuesday 8 February	TBA	Circuit Mission Group
Tuesday 8 February	9.30am	Property Group
Thursday 17 February	7.30pm	Circuit Treasurers Meeting
Wednesday 2 March		Chrestos opens for preaching availability (Summer 1/4)
Thursday 3 March	9.30am	Circuit Executive
Thursday 10 March	7.30pm	Local Preachers & Worship Leaders Meeting
Sunday 20 March	3pm	Circuit Assembly
Friday 1 April		Chrestos closes for preaching availability (Summer 1/4)
Monday 4 April	9.30am	Property Group
Wednesday 6 April		Chrestos opens for Ministers to input their section plan
Wednesday 6 April	2pm	Social & Climate Justice Group
Wednesday 13 April		Chrestos closes for Ministers to input their section plan
Thursday 28 April	9.30am	Circuit Executive
Wednesday 4 May		Summer Quarter Preaching Plan is published
Sunday 22 May	3pm	Circuit Assembly
Monday 6 June	7.30pm	Local Preachers & Worship Leaders Meeting - Central
Tuesday 7 June	7.30pm	Local Preachers & Worship Leaders Meeting - North
Wednesday 8 June	7.30pm	Local Preachers & Worship Leaders Meeting - South
Thursday 9 June	7.30pm	Local Preachers & Worship Leaders Meeting - West
Wednesday 13 July	2pm	Social & Climate Justice Group

Something to include in the newsletter? We'd love to hear from you!

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Welcome to the winter edition of our newsletter. Happy New Year to everyone! This newsletter is produced by the District Eco Group which contains representation from most of the circuits and areas within the Bristol District. If your circuit is not represented please get in touch as we would love you to join us!



Congratulations to the churches which have achieved awards since the last newsletter: Longwell Green United Church LEP, Salem Watley's End and Badminton Road (all bronze awards in Bristol and South Gloucestershire Circuit). If there have been other awards in your Circuit please let us know so that they can be celebrated here.

COP26 may be over, but it will continue to be vital for churches to build on the progress made last year. The Climate Sunday campaign is calling on churches to continue to deepen their understanding of creation care and climate justice, to continue to take action in their buildings and community for the environment, and to raise their voices to put pressure on the UK government to scale up and follow through on climate commitments made in Glasgow. They are organising a webinar on Thursday 20th January from 7pm to 8.30pm, chaired by Andy Atkins, CEO of A Rocha UK. For details and to register follow this link: <https://www.climatesunday.org/climate-sunday-what-next-after-cop26>



A Good News Story – United Church in Longwell Green, Bristol and South Gloucestershire Circuit – Bronze Eco Award

Rev. Mark *Yan Ying Sum* Nam, Curate at United Church Longwell Green writes:

A year ago, two members of our congregation—Carol Jones and Emma Jukes—began the online Eco-Church survey which helps churches measure how effective they are in their life and work at caring for God's creation. I joined the Eco-Team six months ago and between us, we set short-term, mid-term and long-term goals for our church under each category. Most of the long-term goals were complex, requiring input from our ECC—particularly when considering 'buildings' and 'land,' which involve significant cost and planning.

Thankfully, the mid and short-term goals were easier to implement—many involving participation from members of our community. For example, getting young families to create bug-hotels and encouraging folk to sponsor a bird or bat box. Some were as easy as putting up signs reminding people to turn off the church lights or heaters when they were done. Rather movingly, a recently bereaved widower expressed a desire to donate a bench in memory of his late wife to encourage community-engagement with our wildlife garden.

As I reflect upon the impact that the Eco-Church survey has had on our church, what strikes me most is how it has brought us closer together as a community. It has drawn us around a common concern—a concern that is found at the heart of the Gospel—and it has helped us grow as a community through the pandemic.

On Nov 7th we hosted a Climate-Care Sunday in collaboration with a nearby Anglican Church called St. Anne's, and a neighbouring independent church called The Mustard Tree. This was a great success, and the following day we received confirmation of our bronze award. Whilst I am grateful that we have achieved this award, I am most excited about the way it has raised awareness across our churches and fostered a shared sense of responsibility and concern for the world God has given us to share and live in.



If you are looking for items for your church magazine or information about Eco Church to help with your church's journey, why not subscribe to A Rocha's eNews? It contains regular updates on environmental topics. You can find it using your favourite search engine or by this link: <https://arocha.us14.list-manage.com/subscribe>

2022: The Year of Nature? This month's eNews from A Rocha contains an article by Andy Atkins, CEO of A Rocha UK pointing out that the biodiversity crisis will come to the fore this year. A big and early international nature 'moment' will be 'COP15' – the next meeting of the parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity. It will meet in Kunming, China, for two weeks in late April and early May and is tasked with setting new international goals to avoid mass extinction of species. Though far from the UK, we can still expect the event to catapult nature to the top of the news agenda, as scientific bodies and international nature conservation charities release their latest findings and proposals in advance of the conference. Alongside this, it will be the first year of the new Environment Act, passed last November to replace previous European environmental protection laws, and environmental charities will be looking to the government for implementation of its policies to protect wildlife.

Events



Fairtrade Fortnight 21 February to 6 March For two weeks each year at the end of February and start of March, thousands of individuals, companies and groups across the UK come together to share the stories of the people who grow our food and drinks. mine our gold and who grow the cotton in our clothes, people who are

often exploited and underpaid. You can get details of resources and other materials from the Fairtrade Foundation at <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk>

An introduction to Eco Church and getting started (online webinar) Monday 25th April, noon-1pm. This webinar will tell you everything you need to know to get started. Come along if you've heard of Eco Church but haven't started yet, and want to know a little more before you take the plunge. It is hosted by the Church of England Environment Programme but is open to all churches. For details and to sign up follow this link: <https://arocha.org.uk/event/an-introduction-to-eco-church-and-getting-started/>

Eco Church and Net Zero Carbon (online webinar) April 28 @ noon – 1pm. This webinar will focus mainly on the 'Buildings' section of the Eco Church survey, since it is heating and lighting a church building which creates most of a church's carbon footprint. The webinar will explain about free carbon footprinting tools available to churches. *Speaker: Helen Stephens* who is the Church Relations Manager at A Rocha UK. It is hosted by the Church of England Environment Programme, but is open to all churches to attend. For details and to sign up follow this link: <https://arocha.org.uk/event/eco-church-and-net-zero-carbon-2/>

Facebook Group Don't forget to visit our public Facebook group where you can share ideas, ask questions and discuss anything relating to the Bristol Eco District. You can visit the group by following this link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/526479268456099> or simply by searching for Bristol Methodist Eco District. The aim of this group is to share information and ideas to help our churches and individuals to live more sustainably.

Please visit the group and join in discussion – it helps to spread the news of Eco Church across the District and further afield!

