

grapevine

Autumn 2024
Issue Number 45

The **Methodist** Church 
EAST ANGLIA DISTRICT



Mr Roy Hollands, District Property Secretary, and Revd Helen Hollands, the new Chair of the East Anglia District, at the District Welcome Service in August 2024

Welcome and Hospitality

Synod Poem

**They gathered in number with only one purpose,
to further the work of our Methodist church,
the distance they travelled and time that it cost them,
no worries nor problem, they knew of its worth.**

**Joining in love and their motive and passion,
discussions and questions and sharing their all,
seated together with only one reason,
following Jesus and answering His call.**

**Food and hot drinks both combined to sustain them,
worship and praying was food for the soul,
living and loving and serving and sharing,
the result of this all made the many one whole.**

Poem written by Colin, a member of Huntingdon Methodist Church
The poem is Colin's reflection of attending Spring Synod 2024 as an observer

Welcome to the Autumn 2024 edition of *grapevine* 'Welcome and Hospitality'.

In this issue we welcome Revd Helen Hollands (our new Chair of the District) and our new ministers to the District.

We celebrate and share examples of welcome and hospitality in our District, through articles from Downham Market, Huntingdon, Walsingham, St Neots, North Lynn and Watton Methodist Churches.

We learn about how some of our churches and circuits are working towards tackling issues such as climate and justice, and Susan our District EDI Officer shares an interesting article with us about equipping for equality.

Ann Howlett-Foster bids us goodbye as she retires from her role with the Learning Network and we hear about a fantastic cycling challenge that took place to celebrate and raise awareness of 75 years of LWPHomes.

Please remember this is your magazine. If there is something you would like included, we would love to hear from you.

The next issue is due in April 2025. In that issue we will learn a little more about Revd Helen Hollands and also have an introduction to our new Assistant Synod Secretary, Judy Read. You will find contact details on the back page.

grapevine

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CD (audio)

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Introduction

Revd Helen Hollands



Dear Friends,

Thank you for your warm welcome to Roy and I this summer and for all the cards and greetings. Moving is often an unsettling time so it has been wonderful to receive so many messages and invitations to activities in the district (I will get back to you if I haven't already done so). It was a particular joy to share in the warmth of my own welcome service and to be able to take part in several other services as we have welcomed new ministers to East Anglia. It is good to be here.

We have welcomed Revd Moses John to Haverhill, Revd Laura Martin to Ely and Newmarket, Revd Lorna Valentine to the Fens, Revd Diane Grice and

Deborah Humphries to North Norfolk, Revd Derek Grimshaw to a new appointment in Central Norfolk, Revds Steve Oliver and Paulson Devashayam to Ipswich. Also, Revds Paul Critchley and Steve Mann to new roles as superintendents in West Norfolk and Ipswich. I've included several photos of various welcome services. It has been quite a whistlestop and joyful journey around the district, with amazing Methodist hospitality along the way. Thank you all.

One of my daughters, Katherine, runs regularly and she often takes part in a Parkrun on a Saturday morning. Parkruns take place around the country (and beyond) always at 9am on a Saturday morning so everyone is



Revd Lorna Valentine



Revd Laura Martin



Revd Derek Grimshaw



Revd Diane Grice & Revd Deborah Humphries



Revd Moses John

running, or walking, together. Not long ago we went along with her, mostly to look after her dog whilst she was taking part and I was struck by the number of people who join in. There were people of every generation, some walking, some speeding along, some needing assistance, but everyone being encouraged by the stewards as well as each other. It is free of charge and all the stewards are volunteering. Everyone is there to participate together, to run together, to be carried along by each other and to do the best they can that morning. Of course many of you may already take part in parkrun.

I'm not sure I will ever be a runner, but I was inspired even so. I was inspired by the teamwork, the encouragement, the affirmation and the atmosphere. I couldn't help but think that this is how the church may be and should be at its best. Everyone joining in, everyone being encouraged and hoping to be the best they can be. There are no winners or losers - it is all about the taking part and joining in for a common purpose.

Not long afterwards, on a brief visit to Greenbelt this year, we managed to attend a talk by Paul Sinton-Hewitt, the founder of parkrun which began in 2004. We learnt that it is a charity and there are now over 2000 parkruns taking place globally every week. He spoke movingly about the invitational model, of how important it was to him that no one had to pay, there is no

marketing, and everyone is treated as equally as possible, whatever their standard. In his words, 'wherever you go in the world, you will find your home in a parkrun'. He spoke of it as being like his congregation and people even gather afterwards for coffee.

In Paul's letter to the Philippians, he writes about the journey of faith being a bit like a run...

'one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on towards the goal...' 3:13

We press on toward the goal to do better and to be better, to be disciples who live and speak good news, kindness and justice. In all these things we metaphorically 'run' together. Hopefully we make everyone welcome, encourage one another and lift one another up week by week. We know that there is no place for exclusion or putting people down, whoever they are.

Paul Sinton-Hewitt spoke about the importance of being grateful and loving one another. I am already grateful to the Methodist people of East Anglia and hope we can all be kind and compassionate to one another in our churches and circuits. Please encourage all those who are new to the district - I look forward to working with you all.

Every blessing,

Helen

Revd Helen Hollands
Chair of the East Anglia District

Wave St Neots

Creating inclusive space with people with learning difficulties

Revd Sue Baker-Maher

WAVE St Neots began in March 2022 with a one-off pop-up event for people with learning disabilities and friends. Our Art and Faith café is now a regular feature at Berkley St Methodist Church. We run bimonthly on Saturdays between 2 and 4pm.

Making it up as we went along somewhat, our format has become established over time – a time to chat followed by an art activity linked to a faith theme. We eat cake baked by SWITCH – the learning disabilities training centre in St Neots, then share news, sing using Makaton when we can, and have a short reflection followed by prayers.

WAVE (We're All valued Equally) started with WAVE church in North London as a response to traditional church failing to respond to the needs of people with learning disabilities. The movement has expanded to include WAVE café sharing



the ethos established by founders Bernice and Celia. As you can read on their website, the approach is 'with not for' believing that "everyone should have the chance to join

in with community life and be valued equally. It's all about doing things with, and not for, each other. When we do this, everyone benefits

- Understanding and acceptance of people's 'differences' improves
- Confidence grows
- Anxiety reduces
- Friendships are built."

At WAVE St Neots we have a regular cohort of 10 people with learning disabilities who attend with a friend or

family member and other regulars attracted by the inclusive atmosphere. People are increasingly helping out - two come ahead to help move furniture, which takes the sweat out of setting up, others serve the teas and cakes, and

members also contribute to the readings and the prayers. One brought



their Ukulele band which quickly got everyone up and dancing. Friendships are forming and we do feel that we are building a small community and inclusive space in a loosely faith context. Whilst there is no intention for this to be a bridge to traditional church, it was great that two members joined our Easter Day Extravaganza this year and delivered the Gospel reading.

Being linked through WAVE to others wanting to develop inclusive spaces with people with learning disabilities is really helpful. There is no one way of doing WAVE but lots of information and practice to share. So, you might like to visit the WAVE website: <https://www.wave-for-change.org.uk> and like us become a WAVE Maker. Or get in touch with our team at Berkley St - Colin, Jan, Emily, Sue, Christine and Marian at St Neots on wavestneots@aol.com. We will be happy to share experience and learning.

Revd Sue Baker-Maher
St Neots & Huntingdon Circuit



Welcoming all ages at Downham Market Methodist Church

Ralph Perkins & Lesley Dent

Located near the town centre and built with a Social Centre at its heart, Downham Market Methodist Church is open seven days a week with the aim of extending a warm welcome to all ages. So many kinds of activities go on in the building that there isn't room in this article to mention them all.

From Monday to Friday, the Social Centre serves hot drinks during the morning and a hot meal in the middle of the day. Some regulars come every day for the meal and the fellowship.

There is also a "Meals-on-wheels" delivery service with volunteers taking meals out to those who have mobility issues or are recovering from surgery. The Social Centre is "top of the list" when Social Services are recommending a meal delivery service. Those who receive the meals are appreciative and come to realise there is more to the Church than the Sunday service.

Three toddlers' groups meet at DMMC: Tufty Club, Mega Messy and

Munchkins. These are privately run groups. Tufty Club is the only one with church connections. However, all are bringing young families into the building and the mums see what is

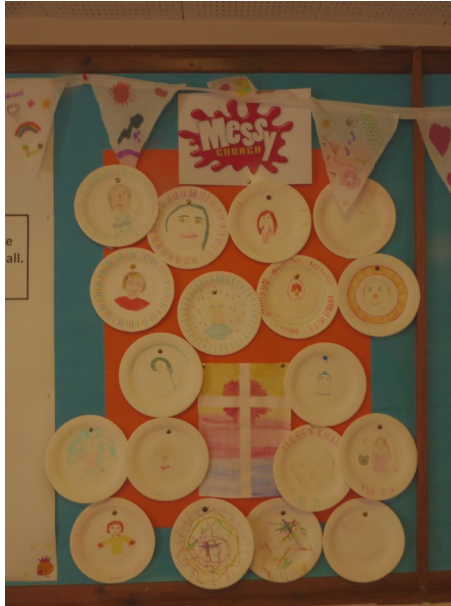
going on and realise that the church is not just a Sunday morning operation.

Our hope is some will join us in Messy Church when the toddlers are older. Messy Church is held on the second Friday of each month from 4.30 p.m. until about six o'clock. It helps the church to connect with



families, who find a Sunday Service unsuitable for their children and themselves. Snacks and drinks are served to welcome the families as they arrive. Messy Church is not as you might imagine just for the children. It is a place for people of different ages and varied backgrounds to socialise, take part in a wide range of activities, learn and worship together. Sometimes three, or even four, generations from the same family come. Messy Church has also offered a safe space

for families living in a women's refuge to have fun together and it is a place where people of different nationalities and ethnic backgrounds meet. Before Covid when there was a larger Messy Church team, a simple cooked meal was served at the end of each session. Now we are only able to do this occasionally. In August we focus on providing a family meal. This August, we celebrated the tenth anniversary of Messy Church. Louisa,



one of our regular mums, baked a birthday cake for us all to share. Whilst the meal was being prepared, there was a scavenger hunt in the garden to the rear of the building and a selection of games such as table football and air hockey borrowed from the Boys' Brigade was laid out in the main hall. The meal was served in the function room overlooking the garden.

Ralph Perkins and Lesley Dent
Messy Church Leaders

Holiday @ Home for Seniors

Paul Hornsby



If you live in Huntingdon, how were you able to go on a 5-day safari holiday without setting foot outside of the town? Easy, you came to Huntingdon Methodist Church's Holiday@Home which this year went on an East African safari-themed holiday.

Last year was our first "holiday", which had a seaside theme and it proved so popular that we were asked to hold another one this year. The holiday ran for one week, Monday to Friday, 10.30am to 3.00pm and each day was filled with a wide range of games, activities, craft work and, of course,

food, all on the safari theme. Several of our holidaymakers either live alone or haven't got the opportunity to go on holiday, so this week was good for them to share with everyone.



The holiday took place in a tented safari encampment complete with camp chairs, picnic hampers and binoculars, all situated by a water hole surrounded by appropriate safari animals. The star attraction was Sasha the giraffe, kindly loaned to us by Castle Street Methodist Church, Cambridge – the story of Sasha is a whole separate story by itself!

One holiday essential when going abroad is a passport, so everybody who came was issued with their own passport. Every passport needs a photograph, so a photograph was taken and stuck in. A different sticker was given to everyone for each day they came and these, together with stickers for each different activity they took part in, were stuck in their passports also. Everyone was free to choose what activity they wanted to do and for how



long, or you could choose to just sit and talk. The activities included pebble painting, art work, quilling, jigsaws and Lego, which all took place accompanied by a whole lot of chatter and laughter.

Following lunch there was a short quiet time with Rev James which was very much appreciated.

Entertainment, including a ukulele

band, a lady who twisted balloons to make different objects and animals, with everyone having the opportunity to try their hand at it and the showing of the film “The Lion King”, complete with popcorn and ice-cream, then filled the rest of the afternoon until leaving time. With coffee and biscuits on arrival, lunch, then tea and cake before leaving, everyone was certainly well nourished for what each day had to offer.

No charge was made for any of the meals or activities, but donations could be made if people felt able and our costs were fully covered. At the end of the week everyone left having had a very refreshing, relaxing and enjoyable week asking “where are we going next year?”

Paul Hornsby
St Neots & Huntingdon Circuit

Huntingdon Methodist Church After School Café

HMC After School Café Team

Here at Huntingdon Methodist Church we have just completed 2 years of our after-school cafe which began during the warm spaces initiative when we noticed many secondary school children biking past the church on their way home after school. They seemed not to know we existed as they chatted to one another cycling past.

What a wonderful, God given (we believe) opportunity to offer a safe, welcoming space between school and home. A new adventure for HMC which weekly brings 50+ children into our light and colourful extension, The Link, where the children can just sit and chat, be on their phones to friends, play air hockey, table football and other games whilst enjoying cakes and hot chocolate, or milk shakes in the summer.

On occasion some of the children like to sit quietly in the Sanctuary or Prayer Room.

We have a wonderful team who work on a monthly rota and all report how polite and appreciative the youngsters are. They bring so much life and joy. We were given a generous grant by the district and bought sustainable colourful cups with a beautiful logo designed by Yasmin Finch.

The cups have been a real hit with the children.

As we start a new academic year, we are very much looking forward to welcoming a lovely, lively bunch of youngsters onto our premises once more! It is amazing what God can do when instead of imposing our ideas on others we meet them where they are, listen and respond. It feels very much that far from being the hosts in this situation we are the guests.

HMC After School Café Team



All are Welcome in this Place

Shirley Stephen

In Watton we are privileged to have a Community Centre attached to the Methodist Church, in the Central Norfolk Circuit. Coffee mornings are held every Wednesday morning alongside the Country market and various other groups hire the Centre during the week, including the Foodbank & The Dementia Café.

A few years ago we decided to start a new Church group. We have been holding a session once a month on a Tuesday afternoon at 2pm, aptly named Tuesdays@2. We have had a variety of activities, crafts, games, musical bingo and lots of fun, singing and fellowship not to mention the refreshments. Our group is open to anyone in the community and we have been drawing new people in to join us. Although these mainly are secular afternoons we strive to highlight the Christian Festivals during the year, Easter Wreaths & Cards, Harvest, Christmas Carol Lanterns and a strong Climate Change theme.



We are looking forward to an action packed Autumn featuring Creation in September with Amazing Butterflies, Corn Dollies in October for Harvest, Endangered Animal Bingo in November

& Christmas Poems & Reflections with Carol Singing in December.

We have made lots of wonderful creations from Napkin Holders to 3D Teal Ducks, which have been greatly appreciated. One lady was so moved -

'This is exactly like the rose in my Wedding Bouquet!' she declared. On one occasion, our 'resident artist' helped us to paint Mandala Stones during which the room was very peaceful and quiet. We are trying to 'Build a house where love can dwell', so we're planning ahead to make different



items, and praying for lots of fun & laughter along the way. We are confident that the love of Christ will end all divisions because 'All are Welcome in this Place'.

Shirley Stephen
Central Norfolk Circuit

A Bike Ride to Celebrate 75 years of LWPHomes!

Jenny Benfield



Bury St Edmunds leisure cyclist, Robert Davie, set off on a lengthy ride around England from the coast of Essex to the coast of North Somerset, entitling his trip **'Why Cycle 550 miles?'**

However this is not as straightforward as it seems, because the ride took him from Westcliff-on-Sea in Essex to Minehead in Somerset, via Woodhall Spa in Lincolnshire and Sherborne in Dorset. This route, which crisscrosses the country, enabled him to visit the 4 sites run by the Leaders of Worship and Preachers' Homes (LWPHomes) of the Methodist Church. 3 of the sites are Care Homes, the 4th is an Independent Living Complex, and the organization is celebrating its 75th Anniversary this year.

The first Home was set up by LPMA Homes (now LWPHomes) in 1949 at Westcliff-on-Sea, so **Robert's Cycle Ride** was devised as part of the 75th celebrations. He set out from the Westerley Christian Care Home at Westcliff-on-Sea on April 16th to a great send-off from the Home and representatives of the Southend and Leigh Circuit. He visited 2 places of Methodist interest as he passed through Bury St Edmunds – Trinity Methodist Church and Culford School.

On his way north he called at the East Anglia Methodist Heritage Centre at Wighton near Wells and was welcomed by

Sarah Friswell.

The next port of call after the LWPHome at Woodhall Spa was Epworth, where he was warmly received by members of Wesley Memorial Methodist Church and those on duty at Epworth Rectory, the home of the Wesleys. Then began the long trip south to Sherborne, Gainsborough House at Milborne Port being the next LWPHomes' site to be visited. He arrived at Westerley in Minehead at the end of May. The aim of the ride was to raise awareness of the continuing work of caring, which began 75 years ago and is still as vital today as it was then.

We are very grateful to all of you across the East Anglia District who have supported Robert with your thoughts, your prayers and your gifts. The total raised so far for the work of LWPHomes is over £3000 including Gift Aid.

We were especially touched by the message of support from Synod

and encouraged by the knowledge that a number of you were following his progress on his daily blog. This is still available online – please google 'Robert Davie Just Giving page' if you are interested in finding out more about his journey and seeing the photos.

Jenny Benfield

Local Preacher in the Bury St Edmunds Circuit and
Vice-Chair of LWPHomes



Walsingham Methodist Church - Hospitality in a Heritage Building

Aileen Fox



The chapel situated in Little Walsingham in the Central Norfolk Circuit was built in 1794, the oldest Methodist chapel in use in the East



Anglia District and is a grade II* listed Georgian building. A Heritage building but there is no society. Unless the A board is placed at the bottom of the steep entry, most people would not know the chapel existed.

What then can this heritage building offer, regarding hospitality? A monthly service has been established **on the second Sunday of the month at 4.30pm** followed by a meal. The fixed Victorian and Georgian pews do not lend themselves easily to hosting meals and social events but where there is a will there is a way!! Portable tables placed in spaces, chairs from under the pulpit and then the meal usually cooked and brought in and kept hot using slow cookers. Glyn is very inventive with the menus.

Usually around 25 people attend, it's a wide circle of people. Some come every month, others pop in when they can, some travel quite a distance. It's a

great fellowship enlivened by visitors passing by or who have visited on our opening days and then return. Some even make a yearly visit, other visitors

discover us through word of mouth and venture in whilst others come from the circuit. So far we have never run out of food and there is always a sweet to follow the main course, plus tea and coffee. Chatting goes on for some time afterwards. It is so good to be able to praise and worship God and share in fellowship in a beautiful old building, plus welcome all who come in for whatever reason.

Aileen Fox
Central Norfolk Circuit



Equipping for Equality – Cultural Intelligence and Inclusive Language Guide

Susan Eldridge



I attended an “Equipping for Equality” event put on by the Connexion. It was hybrid to make it accessible to all so a few of us gathered in London and others joined by Zoom.

The Justice, Dignity & Solidarity Strategy is about attitudinal, cultural and systemic change. It is about the Methodist Church becoming a truly inclusive Church. We are encouraged to see God in every person we encounter. We don’t have to wait to be asked in order to bring about change. We can all be change makers. There are often voices we don’t hear and these may have something really important to say.

We had a session on Cultural Intelligence which is an essential skill for all, not just leaders. What do we mean by culture? Perhaps – ‘the way things are normally done around here’. There is cultural diversity and culture is multi-faceted. Jesus lived within a particular cultural context.

There are multiple types of Intelligence – general, emotional, cultural and spiritual. Cultural Intelligence is about an individual’s capability to function effectively in culturally diverse situations. God’s kingdom is culturally diverse and our Churches need to

reflect this. We need to understand different cultures and avoid feelings of cultural superiority. Churches can benefit from cross cultural learning so we can ensure all feel equally welcome. This session concluded by suggesting we need to accept we are all different, make a real effort to pronounce/spell people’s names correctly, attune our ears to understand the many different accents we encounter and avoid stereotyping people. Years ago I had a colleague with a broad Irish accent which I learnt to understand and I have not had any difficulty with Irish accents ever since!



Guide Dogs Sculpture trail in London Docklands

The event included a workshop on the Inclusive Language Guide. We were asked to increase confidence in using and promoting this Guide. It can be found at www.methodist.org.uk. It is very much a living document, the aim being to update it about every six months. We were given some general principles from it:

- In all areas, it is important to listen to how people identify themselves and be guided by that.
- Avoid labelling people or groups of people or reducing them to the sum total of an experience they may have been through e.g. ‘drug addicts’. Always put people’s humanity first - ‘people struggling with addiction’ is generally preferable, but still listen to how people identify themselves.
- Try to avoid using negative terms. Using a phrase like “in spite of ...”

can be dismissive.

- Be open to correction.
- Remember that human relationships come in many varied expressions.

It contains guidance on inclusive language for various specific groups.

Words used in worship are so important. Make thinking about a term before you use it second nature. Be sensitive on special days like Mothering Sunday or Father’s Day. As new things are written, we need to ensure we use inclusive language. This often comes more naturally to younger people so we may be able to learn from them.

I need to study the Guide and its practical application and I hope you will feel encouraged to do so too!

Susan Eldridge
District EDI Officer

Hospitality at the Beacon

Jon Price



In advance of the completion of our building project, the Beacon Church in North Lynn looked at our history and thought about what has drawn us together in our adoration of God and bringing the good news to others. We hoped that doing so would give shape to what we might do next. As we asked these questions, a particular theme kept coming up: this was a church that

did a lot around food.

Whether it was the community meal, coffee on the couch, or the Filling Station service where we had a bring and share meal, there was an emphasis on us sharing food with one another. This seemed to be such a big theme in our journey that it seemed appropriate to think about how to continue to use our new building in

order to invite others to share food and drink with us. Interestingly, the new extension would give us the opportunity to have a café. Our first lesson was that we could be people extending hospitality to others.

We quickly learnt though that in opening our community café, we would have to rely on others as well. In

a search for volunteers to run the café, we cast the vision out to our local community, asking if

anyone from the area wanted to join

us in delivering it. Sure enough, people came forward and asked to help us.

The second lesson that we learnt was to be recipients of hospitality – inviting others to extend hospitality can be a great way to build meaningful relationships with our neighbours.

In his book *Saved by Faith and Hospitality*, Joshua Jipp suggests that the gospel is about those who were strangers to God becoming friends of God – a process that we see mirrored in acts of hospitality. With our neighbours and volunteers, we were strangers, but through the sharing of food, drink and a vision, relationships are developed with the most unlikely of people.



North Lynn Methodist Church—The Beacon

This ethos has flowed into other projects that we prioritised. Take for example the youth drop in *Pizza Projects*, a collaborative project run with county council detached youth workers to create a safe space for young people. The premise is hardly radical: each Friday we enjoy pizza and have various activities for young people to do. Despite its simplicity it's

proven to be very popular with young people, teaching them that church is a safe place in which they are

welcome. That

shared vision has driven us to create that project to extend hospitality to a group underrepresented in church settings. With our youth workers and local teenagers, we were strangers, but through the sharing of food, drink and that vision, those strangers are now friends.

It's been a humbling lesson for us to learn, that we both extend and invite others to extend hospitality, but in doing so we learn to praise the God that extends to us hospitality. We were strangers to God, now we are His friends.

Jon Price
West Norfolk Circuit

Climate Change and Justice Seeking Church

Stella Davis

Bury St Edmunds Circuit has started its journey towards Net Zero by 2030. Three days have been planned during 2024 to consider what is required and to start to identify the things that need to be done. On the first of our days, one of the things we looked at was how Justice Seeking Church relates to Net Zero. Justice Seeking Church lists five priorities for Christian ministry overall, but each of them has a relevance to our work as an Eco Circuit. These stones were painted to remind us of our discussion.

Enabling a flourishing environment:



For the beauty of the earth...

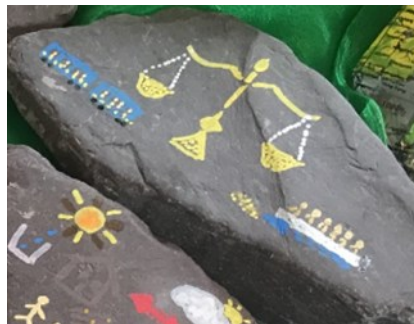
It is easy to see the connection here. We worship creator God who has provided life in all its beauty,

balance and wonder. Plants, trees, flowers, seeds of every kind, animals and birds, seas, fish and creatures of the deep, rivers, mountains, waterfalls, seasons and weather patterns, insects, pollinators and microbes under the soil. It all works together in ways we will never fully understand to provide for and generate life on earth. Or, at least it did, until the most modern human beings came along

developing a culture of overconsumption and depletion, seemingly not knowing how to stop plundering the earth.

A “flourishing environment” means enabling growth for all creation, not just one destructive species.

Seeking Justice for Refugees:



Artist Comment:

People paying their own fares to cross the channel in boats is the first thing we think of, but I also remembered the images of Ukrainian families leaving their homes by train, not knowing when they might return.

Our nation’s handling of refugees is already a challenge and responding to their needs in a humane and sympathetic way is politically divisive. Some areas of the country, especially those nearest to the

places of arrival, hold very negative feelings towards people arriving in small boats. As the environmental crisis deepens more and more people will be forced to leave homes destroyed by flood, desertification or wildfire. Temperatures will become unbearable, and crops will not grow in the places where people’s family history exists and tradition holds them. Human beings and wildlife – insects, birds, animals, plants – must move or face extinction

and the flow is towards the cooler poles or up mountains.

“Seeking justice” means being involved in the discussion, speaking up for those who have no voice and sharing “our” (?) space with those who need a home.

Tackling Inequality and Poverty:



Artist comment:

This image compares a small family living in a large house with plenty of facilities, with large families living in small houses, little water, higher temperatures.

Climate change impacts the poor. The effects on subsistence farmers, on those who cannot cope with fuel and food scarcity and rising prices are much greater. The “rich” are those who do not have to worry about these

things, who can adapt more easily to paying higher prices, who can install things like solar panels or heat pumps to their homes.

The other issue here is “Who is responsible for climate change?” On the whole it is the First World, Europe, North America, Russia, Australia - the wealthier and most technically advanced nations. They are the biggest consumers and creators of the most pollution. To our shame, we are the least impacted – the poorer nations have been the first to feel the effects of climate

change and are least able to cope with man-made extreme weather events.

“Tackling Inequality and Poverty” means examining and reducing our own consumption and sharing from our wealth. “Living more simply, so that others may simply live” as we were warned many decades ago.

Opposing Discrimination:



Artist Comment:

This shows that it is possible for diverse groups to interact and blend with each other.

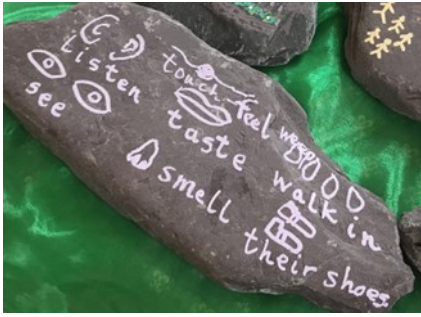
This follows on from thoughts about Peace – the same applies regarding mindset. People who are fighting discrimination or poverty on grounds of age, gender and sexuality, race,

disability have little energy left for additional concerns.

Rising temperatures and extreme weather conditions are more difficult to cope with if you are very young or old or have certain medical conditions. Young children and babies are very susceptible to breathing problems caused by traffic pollution.

Opposing discrimination means that we demand systems which ensure that no-one is disadvantaged and speak up for those who have no voice.

Pursuing Peace:



Artist Comment:

Painting this stone made me think about how peace is pursued through our relationships. It is much more than a simple absence of war. The pale colour stands for non-aggression. We need to use all our senses – to really listen to and look at others to understand their lives. Taste refers to sharing food and conversation, Smell to experiencing other people's norms. Touch and feel is how we connect with others through a hug or a handshake. Peace is generated when we walk in another's shoes, or maybe understand why they have no shoes.

You do not need me to tell you the appalling impact of war and violence on civilians, especially the children, in Gaza, Ukraine and elsewhere. There are already so many reasons to stop fighting.

Environmentally it is disastrous too in pollution and burning and in the destruction of homes and habitats for people and creatures.

Peace is one of the fundamental needs that must be met before we can apply our minds to other things. Where peace at home, at work or in relationships is lacking, there is little mind space left for concern about the environment.

Pursuing peace means developing an empathy with others so that we understand their lives and learn to knit them together with our own.



Stella Davis
Eco Circuit Lead for
Bury St Edmunds Circuit

West Norfolk Climate & Justice Group

Rosemary Rayner

Circuit Twinning and campaign to raise money for the Methodist High School in Matjinge, Zimbabwe

Since May 2023, a small group of interested people from the 16 churches in West Norfolk have been meeting to discuss climate change and related concerns and to plan our circuit twinning with the Matjinge circuit in southern Zimbabwe, which is where our minister, Revd Dr Richman Ncube, grew up and was educated. As part of this, we have been exploring ways to support each other. We

identified an urgent need to improve the water supply at a rural boarding school, owned by the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe. This school is the secondary school which was attended by Revd Ncube. The West Norfolk Circuit raised enough money for a survey of Matjinge High School's water supply to be carried out last year, on Nov 3rd. The water supply was found to be failing and a new borehole needed to be drilled as soon as possible. New pipes and tanks were also needed. We asked for a number of



estimates to be produced, by companies recommended by the charities Practical Action in Zimbabwe, and Children in the Wilderness. Some of the estimates were unaffordable, but by adopting a step by step approach, progress could be made. By March 2024, the circuit had raised enough to attempt to drill a new borehole. Unfortunately, despite an encouraging hydrogeophysical survey, the first attempt at drilling was unsuccessful. A modest water supply was then found about 1 Km from the school, but this was only enough to install a hand pump, and it would have remained very difficult for the school children to access water. Further fundraising was then commenced, with a successful coffee morning in Great Bircham raising £500 and a crowdfunding campaign, which raised more than £1000. We held a celebration event at London Road in King's Lynn on May 12th, to mark the anniversary of the twinning relationship and to bring together people from all over the circuit, who had contributed to our campaign. This was a very joyful occasion and attracted some visitors, who had seen advertisements in the local free paper. There was some Zimbabwean music, performances from the West Norfolk Singers and the Fen Song children from Downham Market, followed by a faith tea and a circuit service. Prayers which we had received from the circuit superintendent in Matjinge circuit were used. The event raised another £765. There was then a wonderful flower festival in Dersingham, which raised a further substantial sum for the fund and which involved the local



primary school children. Thank you to all the local churches, who continued to support this water project.

Following these events, things moved on quickly and the possibility of unblocking a failed borehole in the school grounds, which had previously been drilled in 2020, was investigated. This borehole needed to be unblocked with a drilling rig, but the attempt was eventually successful at the end of June. The school now has a modest

supply of water, enough for two small new tanks and a small solar pump and solar panels to be installed. The school have since sent us videos of a ceremony in July, which was held to celebrate the two new taps being turned on. Zimbabwe has recently been in

the news, because of increasing problems with drought in many parts of the country, due to climate change, and a disaster has been declared, with the anticipated failure of this year's harvests. Although the government of Zimbabwe is promising that there will be a programme to drill more boreholes, it is likely that this will concentrate on the capital city of Harare and surrounding areas, not the more rural areas like Matjinge in the south.

Our minister, Revd Dr Richman Ncube, is visiting Matjinge during his annual leave in August, and will bring back news of how the water project has fared. Our circuit twinning relationship will continue, with some input from the Global Relationships team of the Methodist Church in the UK.

For more information please see the link : <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/west-norfolk-methodist-circuit-1136177>

Rosemary Rayner
Hunstanton Methodist Church

It's been a great 15 years, thank you!

Ann Howlett-Foster



As I approach retirement from this role, I am reminded that, in January 2009, I found myself walking through the gates of Wesley House, Cambridge for an interview. I was naturally apprehensive, and this was mostly about finding the correct door!

Happily, it was a good experience, and I started work as a District Training Officer a few weeks later (the role is now part of the Learning Network in the Connexional Team).

The good experiences have continued.

I have thoroughly enjoyed travelling the length and breadth of the three East Anglian counties (I live in Cambridge) and I think Thetford wins the prize for being the church I have visited the most. Wherever I have been I have been given a warm welcome. I can't imagine the number of chairs I have moved as I have set rooms up for training sessions and I apologise now if I didn't manage to get them back in quite the right place!

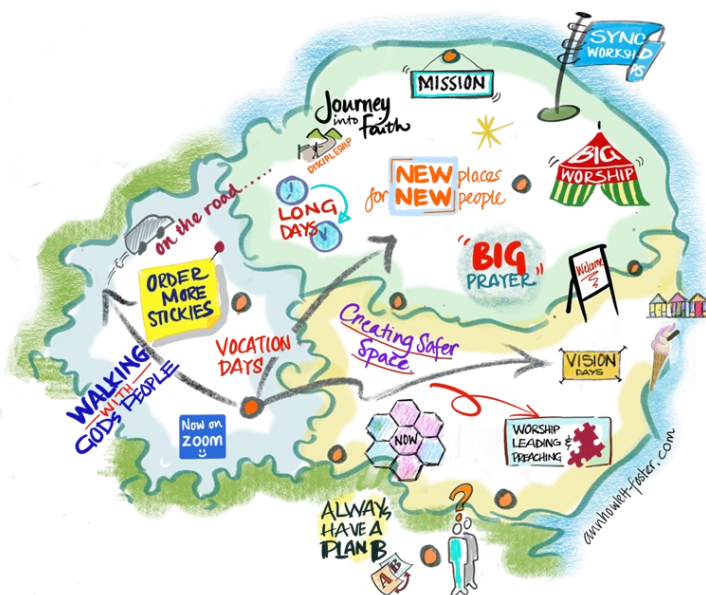
My work has been so varied, and over the years I have had the privilege of working with many of you on a huge range of work from district wide events such as Journey into Faith, Big Prayer and Big Worship, Circuit mission & vision days, right through to working with individuals. More recently I have

been part of the New Places for New People team which has been really exciting and encouraging, and I look forward to watching these new initiatives develop and grow.

Working alongside the District Safeguarding

Officer(s), Safeguarding Training has been a great opportunity to meet so many of you, we really have valued working with you on this vital subject.

Not all of my Learning Network projects have been district based, and I have enjoyed developing and delivering projects across the Connexion, my particular focus has included Safeguarding Training design and Appreciative Inquiry. Learning and



development work is close to my heart and good conversations, whether they be one to one or in a larger group, can be transformational.

I worship at The Salvation Army and working in a Methodist context has been a real privilege, time of growth and discipleship. I have had some great colleagues, worked with wonderful district staff and the people called Methodist have certainly had an impact on me. Someone once referred to me as a SalvoMethodist and I *like* that, as I have had the opportunity to embrace the influence and traditions of both. Without a doubt, this work has also developed me and my faith, in so many

ways.

This has been so much more than a job, it has been a wonderful experience, great fun, hard work, challenging, inspiring, so very varied but most of all it has been a gift and a vocation, one which has been exciting, joyful and filled with lots of beautiful, gracious people and opportunities. I feel blessed and I am thankful. I have loved my work, but it is people I will miss, so thank you for making this SalvoMethodist so welcome.

Every blessing for the future.

Ann 

The Learning Network offers a wide range of learning events which are available to you. Jenna continues to work as the aligned officer for East Anglia.



Learning Network Contact Jenna: thornej@methodistchurch.org.uk

Circuit Stewards' Training <small>Read more</small>	Employment Support <small>Read more</small>	Leadership Development <small>Read more</small>	Supervision <small>Read more</small>
Biblical and Theological Literacy <small>Read more</small>	Calling and Vocation <small>Read more</small>	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Support <small>Read more</small>	Worship Leading and Preaching Development <small>Read more</small>
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Find more Information about what the Learning Network offers on the Methodist Church website.



Contributions

**We hope you have been inspired by the articles
in this edition of *grapevine*.**

**If you would like to make a contribution to
the next edition, we would love to hear from you.**

**Please send any news items, letters and photographs,
which you would like to share with others in the
District to:**

office@eangliamethodist.org.uk

or post to 'grapevine'

**District Office,
Chapel Field Road Methodist Church
Norwich, NR2 1SD**

**For further information, please contact
the District Office on 01603 625765**

***Unfortunately we cannot guarantee
inclusion of all contributions.***