



NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2024

***“THE HEAVENS ARE YOURS, AND YOURS ALSO THE EARTH;
YOU FOUNDED THE WORLD AND ALL THAT IS IN IT.”***

PSALM 89 V 11

ECO CHURCH Latest News

Lynette Rogers, the Circuit Eco Church volunteer organised a lovely community event at Fairplace on 3rd February launching Okehampton's contribution to ART AND ENERGY. The Mossy Carpet



is an art project jointly led by Dartmoor National Park Authority, RSPB, Sustrans and the Woodland Trust. We are invited to make “mossy textile tufts” that can be incorporated into a giant “Mossy Carpet”. It will be displayed at Exeter Cathedral's Eco Church Celebration on April 28th, Hampton Court Flower Show and other places after that. The

Eco Hub by Okehampton College is hosting craft sessions later in February and the work continues with sew on sessions at Exeter Phoenix Centre so please keep making “mossy tufts” that we can send on. The aim is for more than 50m by July and 100m in time for installation at an iconic venue coinciding with the COP30 (United Nations Climate Conference) in November 2025. The artwork has a particular Devon character, being sewn onto Dartmoor wool and demonstrates that lots of people doing small things makes a big difference. “Caring for the environment supports the whole mission of the Church. It's about personal awareness of our responsibility and how we practice our faith as both individuals and as churches,” said Lynette. She wants to be seen as a Circuit resource to help all the churches with responding to the challenge and mission to be an Eco Church. It was great to see people of all ages getting involved with the

message of the Mossy Carpet and receiving the message that Christians care too.



Borough Mayor Lynn Daniel and Okehampton Mayor Allenton Fisher enjoying being 'hands on' with craft activities at Fairplace.

Letter from the Superintendent Minister

Dear Friends

"As the body is clad in clothes, and the flesh in skin, and the bones in the flesh, and the heart in the whole, so are we clothed, body and soul, in the godness of God and enfolded in it."

Mother Julian of Norwich

Julian is perhaps one of the most cherished writers in church history. Her book, *Revelations of Divine Love*, is one of the earliest devotional writings in the English language, that is still in print today. I'm not going to talk about Julian in particular, but more to draw on the principle of a God who reveals truth to humanity in so many ways. It is easy to see God as distant, up in some heavenly kingdom, looking down over creation and occasionally intervening when human beings plead long enough for God's help. However, Julian, along with many others over the centuries, espoused a different experience of God. One that lives with us, communicates with us in a myriad of ways, dreams, words, visions, scripture, prayer, nature...I could go on. There is a vibrancy to this experience, a sustaining and supporting and loving experience that we are bathed in, even when things are at their most difficult, God

is always present, always to be relied upon, always to be felt, always to be listened to and a ready ear for our own outpourings.

During the seasons of Lent and Easter and the extraordinary passion narrative of Jesus, I pray we open ourselves and all our senses to be able to experience the rich tapestry of all this Jesus Christ to humanity. To perhaps ask, like Julian, for a new revelation of what it means to us today to proclaim the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Many Blessings - Rev Chris

News From Around the Circuit

Iddesleigh

The folk at Iddesleigh continued their Christmas celebrations well into the new Year with a raucous family party on 19th January. Much fun was had by everyone including Rev Chris who showed his competitive side! Thank you to all who contributed to make this a great success.

The third Friday of each month is a family night with games and refreshments. All are welcome.

February 16th 7.00pm is Pancake Night.

Boasley

On 18th January, Rev Loraine Mellor, Chair of the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly District together with Rev Darren Middleton of the Plymouth and Devonport Circuit joined with the folk at Boasley's Soup and Sweet. They were there to see the great things that can be achieved in rural areas and a full hall of people enjoying delicious food in good company was a brilliant example of the ministry of hospitality that the West Devon Circuit is known for.

Margaret, a member of the walking group that regularly meets for refreshments at Boasley said, "The teas are so good, it makes you pick your feet up to get there quicker!"

Petrockstowe Community Church

The Christmas Day service featured some fabulous air guitar from members of the congregation as they sang a cheerful Christmas song. Look on the church's Facebook page to see a video clip!

On 21st January the congregation celebrated the formation of Petrockstowe Community Church on the 90th anniversary of worship beginning in the Methodist Chapel. It was a joyous day of praising God for the past, the present and trusting in him for the future. Oh, and lots of tea and cake!

The service was jointly led by Rev Chris Jackson and Rev Martin Warren, the address was given by Rev Paul Snell, the County Ecumenical Officer from Churches Together in Devon.



 PETROCKSTOWE COMMUNITY CHURCH

You're invited to a

Vintage Tea

Please kindly join us for a delightful afternoon of tea, treats and wonderful company as we host an enchanting vintage tea.

Friday 23 February - 2:00pm - 4:30pm
Baxter Hall, Petrockstowe, EX20 3HJ

Tickets Cost - £10:00
Please contact Dee French on 07887 800104
Numbers will be limited so please book early!



Bridestowe

Just 10 is a course based on the Ten Commandments and the folk at Bridestowe are half way through, meeting every Thursday from 1.30 – 2.45 followed by refreshments. A Lent Course begins on Tuesday 20th February at 7pm in the ARK, commencing with a meal. The theme is "The Creeds". Please advise Dean James if you wish to attend. (01566 471620) The ARK is open Tuesdays 10.00 – 12.00 and 2.00 – 4.00 for

a cuppa and company, also Laugh and Craft on Thursdays 10.00 – 12.00. Second Saturday of each month there is a charity coffee morning.

Chilla

On 2nd December Chilla Chapel held a coffee morning so that people could come and see the Christmas Carol themed window displays. A happy and successful morning. Thank you to all who took part.

The Chilla and Madworthy congregations continue to worship together regularly, enjoying fellowship together at both chapels.

On 15th March there will be a **Prayer Day** at Chilla from 11.00 – 4.30. We will be exploring many different aspects of prayer. More details will be sent to churches soon.

Hatherleigh

Christmas at Hatherleigh was a lot of fun with many people participating in the services. The most unusual member of the congregation was Bungie the bearded dragon who behaved impeccably at the Carol Service. Here she is with Cindy.



There will be a weekly **Lent Course** at Hatherleigh beginning on Wednesday 14th February at 2.30pm and repeated at 7.30pm. Lent with Poems and Paintings

will explore aspects of Lent through the arts. Led by Vicki Penfound.
Refreshments provided.

HATHERLEIGH COMMUNITY WELLBEING FAIR

Fri March 8th 3 - 6pm

**At Hatherleigh
Community Centre**

The West Devon
Methodist Circuit will
have a table display at
this event. We hope to
see you there!

*Coffee morning every Tuesday 10 – 12
hosted in turn by six of the Circuit's
chapels. Come and enjoy a friendly
cuppa.*

Madworthy

Great fun at “A Christmas Day” Patchacott Village Hall 13th December. Thank you everybody who came and special thanks to those who prepared and served the food. We arrived at 11am for coffee and mince pies, then we played games and made crafts and sang carols before hot turkey rolls and Christmas pudding. After lunch and more crafts, puzzles and word searches, we read the Christmas Story and sang more carols before tea and Christmas cake at 4pm.



The new all age breakfast and Bible journalling group, Creative Faith, is proving popular. The next one is Sat 24th Feb 9.30 – 11.00. Come along and bring your imagination!

On Fridays beginning 16th Jan at 12.30 Angela Banfield is leading a **Lent Course**. Starting with a light lunch, the theme is “Difficult Questions” Answers not guaranteed but good discussion and friendly opinions freely shared.



The building at Madworthy is just about completed and everyone is loving the bright and cosy space. Thank you to everyone who has

enabled this dream to come true. We look forward to it being used by the Circuit and District as well as our own community.

Providence

Congratulations to Reg and Hazel who celebrated their Platinum Wedding Anniversary on 6th January.



Providence continues to get good attendance at the 3pm monthly services (Third Sunday). They are still adjusting to being nationally known from the award received last November. If you haven't seen the article on the Methodist Church Website yet, click on the link below or google it. The story has been inspiring to many churches

around the country. <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/news/latest-news/all-news/rural-church-wins-two-national-awards/>

Fairplace



The traditional crib in the front window at Fairplace was joined by an angelic host for an 'Hark! the herald angels sing' display. Over 150 people in our community, covering a wide age range, contributed to making the angels: coloured in paper angels, peg-doll angels and wool pompom angels. We thank OCRA Holiday Activities, OCRA Make & Move, Okehampton Primary School Young Carer's Group, Okehampton Primary School Stay & Play Group, Oke Tree Network, Okey Memory Café and St James Primary School for their fabulous creations.

The church was full for the Thanksgiving Service on 26th January for Derek Allin who was a very active member for many years. The Men's Forum, of which Derek was a founding member, sang in tribute to their friend who died aged 97. An uplifting service giving thanks for a long life well lived. Jill Allin would like to express her gratitude for all who came to share in this service.

KNIT AND NATTER Is a knitting group which meets at Fairplace on the first Thursday of each month from 10.00 – 12.00. They are a small, friendly group who would welcome new members. Just turn up or contact Jill for more details. (01837) 54590

*You don't knit because you are
patient – you are patient because
you knit.*

Stephanie Pearl-McPhee

PLAIT



Preventing Loneliness And Isolation Together is a group formed in the aftermath of Covid lockdown when it was so apparent that there were people in desperate need of company. Its first meeting was on 28th July 2021. It meets at Fairplace church hall every Wednesday 10.30 – 2.30. PLAIT has a gentle atmosphere and is ideal for those who may be intimidated at the prospect of a social life. Alan Partridge, co-ordinator says, “Okehampton is well provided for, but there are people who slip through the net. Plait has also attracted people from outside of town. Sometimes people come through social prescribing from their GP, sometimes from personal invitation from attendees. We are honest with what we can and cannot provide. There

are good facilities here for the disabled but if someone needs a carer then the carer must come to Plait with that person.”

It is a small group currently of about 10-12 per week who meet for a cuppa and a chat. The conversation can be guided with people sitting at two or three tables, which also enables the hard of hearing to engage more fully. There is a seated exercise session for all abilities followed by lunch of tasty homemade soups and sweets. Special diets can be accommodated with notice. After lunch there is a thought for the day and a prayer then another cuppa before going home. Plait is open to those of all faiths and none, everyone finds a welcome. There is room for a few more, the maximum that can be catered for is 20.

“Serving our fellow human beings is part of our Christian worship”, says Alan. He and his team of helpers live out their faith and witness in a humble, practical and very effective way. He uses the phrase that was said to him years ago, “All people are proper people”.

A member said over the Christmas period, “It has been a lifeline for me at a very difficult time.”

If you are interested in supporting this work and could come and befriend people over a lunch, or want to know any more about PLAIT contact Alan (01837 54397)



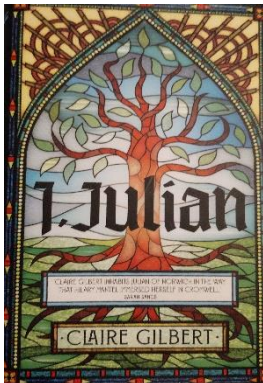
“The most terrible poverty is loneliness and the feeling of being unloved.” – Mother Teresa

BOOK REVIEW

I, JULIAN by Claire Gilbert

To the established admirers of Julian of Norwich I commend this book. To those who love a historical novel, I commend this book. Claire Gilbert, the Director of Westminster Abbey Institute and author of many works on spirituality, ethics and public life has written this “Imagined Autobiography” of Julian. Steeped in years of study and familiarity with her subject, Claire has given us a first person encounter with the enigmatic medieval mystic which deftly transports the reader to another time. The description of her dedication as an anchorite is so evocative and very moving. It’s a book that’s hard to put down.

Vicki Penfound



“A beautiful, intensely moving achievement which not only excites literary admiration: it renews the reader’s faith that ‘all shall be well’”

A.N. Wilson

“it’s as if we have finally found the lost autobiography of one of the medieval world’s most important women... it is a joy to read”

Janina Ramirez



INFUSION

children | youth | families

Hello!

Well, I can't quite believe I'm writing the February entry. It feels like this term has barely started!

Looking back since last time, we...

- took 41 young people to Plymouth on a coach for shopping and trampolining.
- led Toddler Nativity Sensory Sessions at Halwill Toddlers and Cheeky Monkeys in Okehampton.
- ran a Nativity themed Out and About in Bridestowe's Ark with 19 parents, babies and toddlers.
- went to Bow Garden Centre with 35 parents, babies and toddlers for a session based on Julia Donaldson's Sharing a Shell.
- sold out and partied the night away at the Kree8 New Year's party with 75 young people from across the area.
- ran our first Creative Faith session at Madworthy with 20 participants from across the circuit, representing all ages.
- had our first Transformed and Reframed house groups for 2024.
- took 5 young people to the Gathering in Exeter for a time of worship and to connect with other Christian young people across Devon.



What's new?





Creative Faith
 - breakfast and bible journaling group -
 Madworthy Methodist Church | Every 4th Saturday | 9:30am - 11:00am
 Breakfast starts at 9:30am. Journaling starts at 10am.
 Suitable for all ages and levels of experience.
 Join us for a time of breakfast, worship, study and slowing down in the business of life with meditative creativity as we immerse ourselves in scripture. Whether you're a notetaker, drawer or collager, there will be something for everyone.

2024 Dates
 27th Jan | 24th Feb | 23rd Mar | 27th Apr | 25th May | 22nd Jun
 27th Jul | 24th Aug | 28th Sep | 26th Oct | 23rd Nov | 28th Dec

Book in via: westdevonmethodists.org.uk/youth/activities/

Madworthy Methodist Church

INFUSION

West Devon Methodist Circuit

Upcoming Events:

Please note, a few of the dates are currently provisional. Go to the website for the confirmed details.

- Sun 18th Feb 2024 – Ignite (Stowford Camp Reunion and Taster Session)
- Sat 24th Feb 2024 – Creative Faith
- Sun 25th Feb 2024 – Transformed House Group (Y10+)
- Wed 6th Mar 2024 – Reframed House Group (20s-30s)
- Sun 17th Mar 2024 – Kree8
- Wed 20th Mar 2024 – Out and About
- Sat 23rd Mar 2024 – Creative Faith
- Sun 24th Mar 2024 – Transformed House Group (Y10+)
- Thurs 28th Fri 29th Mar 2024 – Easter Sleepover (provisional date)
- Mon 8th Fri 12th – Holiday Club Tour (provisional window)




For more details about all activities and links to bookings, go to <https://westdevonmethodists.org.uk/youth/activities/>



BABY AND TODDLER CLOTHES SWAP


WHAT IS IT?
The baby and toddler clothes swap is a great way to save money and reuse clothes over and over again as a community. With a variety of clothes for babies and toddlers of different ages, there should be something for everyone.

HOW DOES IT WORK?
You are encouraged to borrow what you want and bring it back when it no longer fits as well as contribute donations of clothes in good clean condition for future parents. To keep this manageable resource, please wash the clothes before returning and when you collect them. The clothes bank will be available once a month at Cheeky Monkeys in Fairplace Hall in Okehampton (or on request).

For more information, contact sarahann.balsdon@gmail.com

 **Cheeky Monkeys**

INFUSION  @infusion.methodist  @infusion.methodist

 West Devon Methodist Circuit

Social Media

The West Devon Methodist Circuit has a good presence on social media, but it could always be better. Many of our churches have their own Facebook page, it is a great way to keep the community up to date with events and to encourage one another. The West Devon Circuit has its own Facebook page and we share pages of interest from individual churches to the circuit and beyond. We develop relationships with community groups through our Facebook page and this is proving an effective way of demonstrating the love of God in action. If your church doesn't have a Facebook page, consider putting information on your local community page. Contact Vicki for more details.



Churches Together in Okehampton has a new Facebook page. The commissioning service at Fairplace on January 21st saw Churches Together Okehampton become officially part of Churches Together England. A day of rejoicing in the unity found in Christ.

Keep an eye on the West Devon Circuit website as that is updated regularly.

The West Devon Methodist Church Youtube channel will have new content. Last year's Lent Reflections are still there, based on local landmarks, you may be inspired to find the locations and have a mini pilgrimage of your own.

In a technological age we recognise that there are many who cannot access the internet and the printed version of this newsletter, together with the printed "At Home" services are much needed. If you know of anyone who would like a copy of the weekly At Home Service sheet please contact a steward at your local church, or the Circuit Administrator.

EASTER



At this special time of year, keep an eye out for the Easter services that will be held around the circuit. There will be something for everyone.

Remember the clocks go forward on Easter Saturday night!

“Christ has indeed been raised from the dead.”

1 Corinthians 15 v 20



Editor's note

Being a rural Circuit, the people of West Devon are very aware of the changing of the seasons and how the seasons are changing. Our response to environmental needs is a real witness to the world. Please let me know what your church is doing for the environment, so we can encourage others.

The next issue of the Newsletter is going out in May. Items to me by 26th April please. It would be good to include photos of Easter displays (and yes, I'm thinking of Bridestowe's Easter garden last year!)

Vicki Penfound foreva26@hotmail.co.uk



Superintendent Minister:

Rev Chris Jackson (01837 52302)

chrisjackson7@gmail.com

www.westdevonmethodists.org.uk