

"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!" 1 John 3 v 1

Presidential Visit



Back in the early Spring, the President of the Methodist Conference, Revd Helen Cameron had a day in Devon. She began in Plymouth, "I saw some cutting-edge work, helping people get in touch with God and God's love for them. I have enjoyed the variety of what Methodist ministry and mission looks like on the ground. I have spent time with military chaplains, and they are a deeply impressive bunch. I have spent time with children and young people at the 3G event at the NEC where the demand for these young people to share in holy communion meant that they ran out of bread and wine. It was incredible."

What was her impression of our bit of rural Devon?

"Beautiful." Dartmoor was showing itself off with blue skies and an abundance of spring flowers. "The chapels of rural West Devon are beacons of light in their communities, and we need to support them as they are supporting us."

Revd Helen visited Providence, Petrockstowe and Madworthy to get a flavour of the Circuit. Unsurprisingly laying on "light refreshments" at Providence meant we were all amply supplied with a delicious abundance! Helen met Revd Martin Warren and Christine Cottle at Petrockstowe and heard the story of Petrockstowe Community Church, seeing for herself the impact it has had on the village. She was very encouraged by the way people had come together.

Finally, a visit to Madworthy. Helen looked around and gazed out of the kitchen window. "I'm in love", she said. Helen joined in the activities laid on and tucked into the food



provided. She enjoyed conversations with folk who had come from across the circuit to share in fellowship.

What does she think about the folk in small rural chapels who might feel insignificant compared to big urban churches? Helen was unequivocal in her reply, "I believe in rural Methodism. It exists and it needs more resources. The point is not about numbers; it's about impact and that's what I see here."

INFUSION

children | youth | families

The Easter Emoji Holiday Clubs held at Winkleigh, Petrockstowe, Hatherleigh and Madworthy were a great success. It was lovely to see familiar faces and also some new youngsters who came to have fun, games and take part in various activities as well as learning about the Easter story. Points were given to each team as they answered questions on the videos. A great motivator for paying attention, the children's knowledge was impressive. As has become the tradition, the leader of the winning team at the end of the day gets a pie in the face, which caused great hilarity in the room. Thank you to all the volunteers who help make holiday club reach so many children. We all enjoyed ourselves immensely.

If you would like to volunteer as a helper, please contact Sarah. Summer Holiday clubs are 21st July at Winkleigh, 23rd at Hatherleigh, 24th at Petrockstowe and 25th at Madworthy.





Stay and Play Café has been a huge success both on April 15th and on May 27th where a whopping 90 plus children took over the hall and sanctuary space at Fairplace. It was a welcome refuge from typical “Soaky Okey” weather and everyone had a great time. There were new people there who

thoroughly enjoyed themselves. One mum who had not been before said, “It’s amazing, my children have had a go with everything here and have had the best time. I am so grateful for this event today as I was wondering what I could do to keep them occupied.” The atmosphere was buzzing with activities, the team got everyone fed with military precision and the new doughnut makers were thankfully up to the task. Phew!

Upcoming dates: Tuesday 29th July, Tuesday 19th August and Tuesday 28th October



Since it began last year, Busy Bees has grown into a wonderful happy group. Parents have commented on how welcome they feel and are impressed with the variety of activities and toys available. We hear how young mums appreciate having a supportive social time and it’s great to see new friendships form. One parent said that her daughter settled quicker at Busy Bees than at any of the other groups she had attended, which was lovely.



Father’s Day card made by a busy bee!

Next dates are 19th June, 3rd July and 17th July

EASTER



Easter Cross at Fairplace >



< Exbourne had a beautiful Lenten Cross.



< Cross outside Iddesleigh Chapel

There were lots of beautiful displays around the circuit, here is a selection, some inside, some outside. All a witness to the meaning of Easter from the stark symbolism of a Lenten Cross to the rich explosions of colour celebrating Christ's resurrection on Easter Day.

A Circuit Easter Celebration with Okehampton Churches Together at Fairplace on Easter Evening was a joyous event with people gathered around tables reminding us

of the disciples gathered in the upper room when Jesus turned up. Although it would be true to say we had more cake!

Hatherleigh Easter Garden >



Petrockstowe



"A candle loses nothing by lighting another candle."

James Keller

Leslie Gilbert

This is part of an article which Lucy Gilbert put together for Hatherleigh Nursing Home Magazine. Les enjoyed a big celebration for his 99th birthday. Thank you, Lucy, for permission to share this.

A calling to the Land, Faith and His Family

On the 30th of March 1926, Leslie Gilbert was born in Lower Stowford, Halwill, West Devon, where he grew up with his parents and two younger sisters. The Gilbert's were a farming family, later moving to Petrockstowe in 1930, where they rented a large mixed farm from the Clinton Estate. His father, a First World War veteran, returned from service to continue working the land. Leslie attended

school in Peters Marland, Petrockstowe, and Hatherleigh, before leaving at age 14 to work on the family farm. Days were filled with the routines of rural life, milking cows, tending sheep, and looking after pigs and poultry. By 17, he had also become a local preacher for the Methodist Church, a role that would take him across the country and remain a core part of his identity for the rest of his life.

By the time Leslie turned 18, the Second World War was well underway. Initially called to work in the mines, he was later deemed essential to the war effort at home, so he continued farming to help feed the nation in a time of crisis. Leslie took particular pride and interest in raising Large White pigs, often which were sold at the Smithfield Market in London, and he won many trophies for best bacon carcass over the years. Around this time, he joined the Young Farmers and developed a keen interest in livestock judging and public speaking. He later served as chairman of the local NFU branch, becoming a well-known and active presence in the agricultural community.



Leslie with his sisters

In 1955, Leslie married his first wife, Olive, who had a passion for horses and took part in local shows and hunts, whilst Leslie preferred shooting, often returning home with pheasants or rabbits. Together they worked hard to build up the

farm and after Leslie's parents retired, they were able to purchase it from the Clinton Estate. The farmhouse itself holds historical significance, with its roots tracing back to the Domesday Book of 1086! Life on the farm soon grew busier, as Leslie and Olive had three sons and one daughter together, Geoffrey, Marilyn, Michael and Kenneth. All four children grew up with a love for horses and were actively involved in farm life from an early age, Leslie loved spending time with them, especially after work by sharing stories and hearing about their day.

In the year of 1989, tragedy struck the family, as Leslie's wife and mother to his children, Olive, sadly passed away. Leslie was left devastated by this loss and found support through his son, Michael, who was now aged 24 and worked on

the farm. By 1991, two of the children had now got married and grandchildren soon followed, this brought him great joy again and occupied him once more.



The family farm

Leslie's connection to the church and wider community remained constant throughout his life. He served as an ambassador for the Leaders of Worship and Preachers Trust and was later honoured with a certificate recognising 70 years of service.

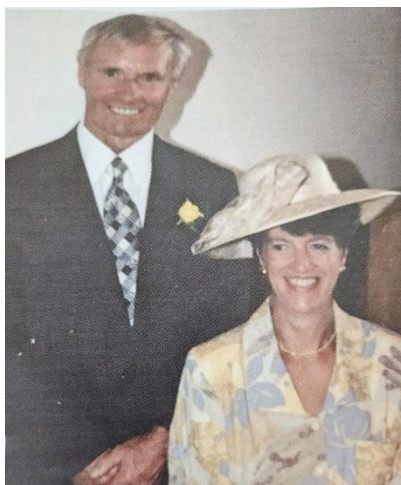
Alongside preaching and with a strong bass singing voice, he was invited to join a local choir by a friend, where he thoroughly enjoyed performing in different churches and chapels. A few years later, it was there that a friend introduced him to Lucy, his future second wife.

The couple fell in love and married in 1995. In his wedding speech, Leslie humorously remarked that he had *"always fancied her"*. Following their wedding, Leslie made the decision to leave the farm and move to the town of Hatherleigh. Whilst town life came as a bit of a culture shock at first, he quickly adapted and became a part of the community. Lucy already had three children of her own and Leslie was delighted to welcome them into his life, adding three stepchildren and six grandchildren into the ever-growing family—he loved regular visits from the abundance of grandchildren!

Leslie and Lucy are still happily married and recently celebrated 30 years together. Over the past three decades, they've enjoyed travelling as a couple, as they visited Tasmania and Perth in Australia to visit family over the years. Lucy recalls, *"Les was pleased the Tasmanian clotted cream tasted just like Devon's!"* A trip to Bangkok, Thailand followed which was *"an exciting yet chaotic experience at times!"*. The family continues to grow—Leslie is now a proud great-grandfather to four, with another expected in the summer. Leslie enjoys staying in touch with his grandchildren online who live in Australia, especially when they show him stick insects, lizards and snakes.

Now living at Hatherleigh Nursing Home, Leslie is recognised for shaping his community through the generations, by supporting the war effort, being a strong

voice in the agricultural community and his presence in the church. He's supported to live a continuation of life, one that reflects his family values and lifelong passions. Lucy visits the home most days and often takes part in events and activities alongside Leslie. He enjoys participating in animal therapy visits, joining in the home's regular church services and performances from the local choir, reading farming books and spending time in the garden. But most of all, Leslie treasures his time with his grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and his Lucy.



Madworthy

On May 4th, we enjoyed a lovely sunny day for our Spring Walk with a focus on the Prodigal Son and the 80th VE Day Celebrations. The link was "Homecoming". We made a "Father's Embrace", wrote footprint prayers, planted poppies, made paper flowers and made nature frames for the walk to consider what we are thankful for. All this and we ate plenty of bacon baps and cake throughout the day. Thank you to everyone for coming, we raised £331.50 for church funds.






Forest Church

- exploring God's creation -

Join us every 2nd Sunday, to meet, explore and worship in God's Creation.

2-3pm

Meet at Evergreen Farm,
Beckett, Ashwater, Devon, EX21 5HE

Come prepared for whatever the weather.
Hot chocolate at the end.
Dogs on leads welcome.
Suitable for all ages.
Toilets available at the meeting point.

 West Devon Methodist Circuit

 westdevon.methodist

 westdevonmethodists.org.uk



Creative faith

- breakfast and bible journaling group -

HE WILL COVER YOU WITH HIS feathers AND UNDER YOUR FEET

Psalm 91

CREATIVE FAITH

The morning begins with breakfast at 9.30 and the creativity at 10.00 There is a time of worship, prayer and meditating on scripture. Creative Faith is different to any other prayer group or Bible Study in that you get to really slow down with God. People come from several different churches and denominations to share together. It's suitable for people of any age, experience or ability and has the gentle leadership of Kathryn Timms, Local Preacher and Art Teacher. On my visit there were people attending for the first time. Everyone was very enthusiastic. Les and Kate from Petrockstowe said, "It's so relaxing and thought provoking." Lise, also from Petrockstowe said, "Sarah invited me, she said she thought I'd like it. It's good to chat and get to know people from other churches. I like the format and would be happy if it went on longer – it's so absorbing."

Elizabeth who has been coming for a while said, "It helps me to express my faith." "Does it do you good?" she was asked. Elizabeth reacted with a big smile, "Oh definitely!"

Upcoming dates: 28th June, 26th July, 23rd August, 27th September



**OPEN DOG SHOW
AND CREAM TEA**

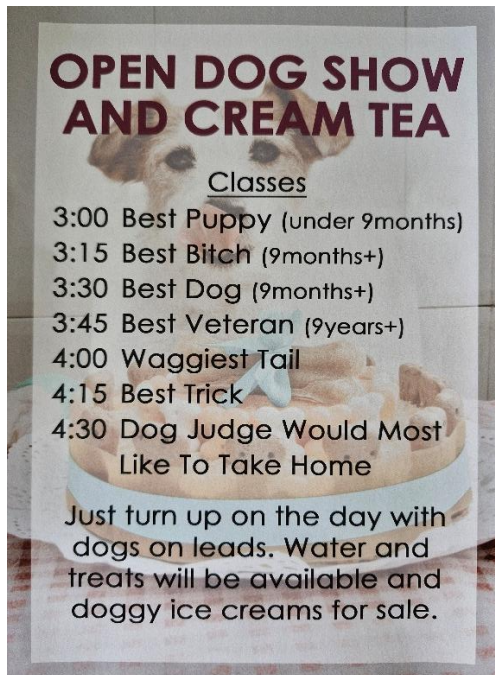
Sunday 29th June 2025
Madworthy Methodist Church
EX21 5AD

Join us for a family fun
afternoon with a dog show
and afternoon tea.

Afternoon Tea
2:30-5pm
Cream Teas £3

Dog Show
3-4:45pm
£1 Entry Per Class

  @madworthy.methodist



**OPEN DOG SHOW
AND CREAM TEA**

Classes

- 3:00 Best Puppy (under 9months)
- 3:15 Best Bitch (9months+)
- 3:30 Best Dog (9months+)
- 3:45 Best Veteran (9years+)
- 4:00 Waggiest Tail
- 4:15 Best Trick
- 4:30 Dog Judge Would Most
Like To Take Home

Just turn up on the day with
dogs on leads. Water and
treats will be available and
doggy ice creams for sale.

Praying for good weather. Last year's event was so amazing that Madworthy are doing it again!

LWPT WEEKEND 28th - 29th June

The Leaders of Worship and Preachers Trust is an ecumenical charity which seeks to provide resources, support and information to preachers. As Methodists, we support its work and mission. **The Circuit service at Fairplace on 29th 11.00am** is a special one for our Local Preachers and it would be wonderful for a good turn out in support of their ministry. We are blessed with a good number of Accredited Preachers and Preachers in Training, let us give thanks to God for them and pray that more will hear the call to preach. It's not easy but it is a tremendous privilege.

The event on Saturday is open to all and we look forward to hearing Ruth's message as well as enjoying the musical items.

LWPT WEEKEND

HATHERLEIGH METHODIST CHURCH

SATURDAY 28TH JUNE

7.00PM

Speaker: Deacon Ruth Richey

Mission Lead for North Devon

Entertainment

Bring and Share Finger Food

All Welcome

Iddesleigh

Iddesleigh will be having their next Family Night on 20th June at 7.00pm.

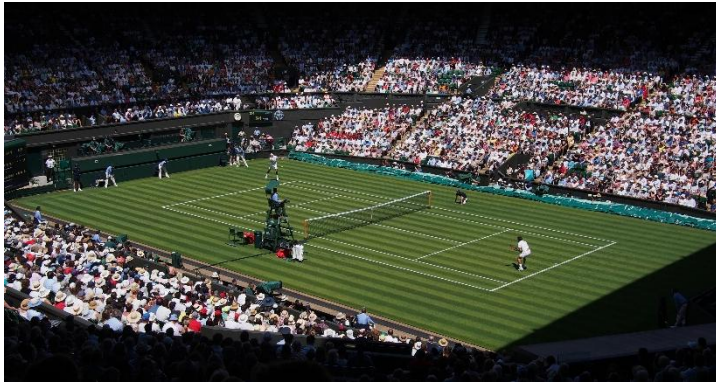
Everyone is welcome for fun and games with refreshments.

There is a break over the summer holidays then a family evening on 19th September.

It's a special one for nature lovers so keep the date in your diary...

Petrockstowe

It's the village Summer Fayre on Sunday 28th June 12.00 – 5.00pm and the church will be having a cake stall. Donations of cakes, something sweet or savoury, jams or chutneys would be much appreciated. Please drop off any items to Ann Fox the day before the Fayre.



Sunday 13th July
Enjoy the Men's Wimbledon Final in style with good company at Baxter Hall. Strawberries and cream with a Pimm's.

Providence

The Exhibition of Chris Chapman Dartmoor Photographs is open every 2nd Saturday of the month from May through to October. 12.00pm – 6.00pm Refreshments throughout.
Upcoming dates: 14th June, 12th July, 9th August, 13th September, 11th October

Hatherleigh

Flower Festival the weekend 23rd/24th August with a special Songs of Praise Service on Sunday at 11.00am.

Coffee Mornings every Tuesday 10am. Cakes and bakes for sale and all sorts of other things...

WESTDEVONMETHODISTS.ORG.UK

Heritage Fund

HERITAGE EXHIBITION

Dis dissenting voices is a touring exhibition celebrating the diverse history and life of the Methodist church in WESTDEVON.

Come and be immersed in the story, explored through writing, art and song, surrounded by artefacts and photographs celebrating Methodist life.

Open from 10am followed by a concert at 4pm with JIM CAUSLEY & friends refreshments available throughout.

March 29th Exbourne
 April 26th Chilla
 May 31st Boasley
 June 28th Bridestowe
 July 26th Winkleigh
 August 30th Northlew

West Devon Methodist Circuit

DISSENTING VOICES
 — CELEBRATING DIVERSITY IN —
 WEST DEVON METHODISM





The Exhibitions thus far have been great fun and turned up some very interesting tales. One of the biggest surprises was to discover a link with the Titanic.

Ethel Nancekivell shared the story of her grandparents, Bill and Henrietta (Dolly) Branch who had tickets for the Titanic to help Bill's brother Harry with his farm in Ontario. Arriving in Southampton, they randomly met a couple who were desperate to travel on the ship, but it was sold out. Bill and Dolly decided to sell their tickets and get a later voyage as they weren't in a rush and could use the money they had saved.

Bill later told how they saw the Titanic's flares on the horizon and assumed it was celebrating arriving at port. However, as they journeyed on, they saw deck chairs and debris carried on the current

and they realised that there had been a terrible tragedy. The couple who bought their tickets did not survive. Bill and Dolly returned to Devon in 1915, Dolly brought back a pure silk coat, which has been passed down the family and was on display at Exbourne. Dolly sadly died in her forties but Bill lived into old age. They now are laid to rest in Northlew Methodist graveyard.

We discovered that the late Margaret Darke of Chilla Chapel lost two uncles on Titanic, they were heading out to Canada too. Then at the Boasley Exhibition it came to light that Linda Trigg's father's cousin was also lost on Titanic. It's incredible to uncover these stories and we wonder how many folk from this area set out to farm in Canada. Many farm workers were Methodists and there was a campaign to get farmers over there. There must be more tales to tell and people to remember.



Dolly Branch's coat on display at Exbourne.

We are recording oral histories as well as copies of photos and printed material to create a Circuit Archive. Do come along and contribute, you may be far more interesting than you think you are!

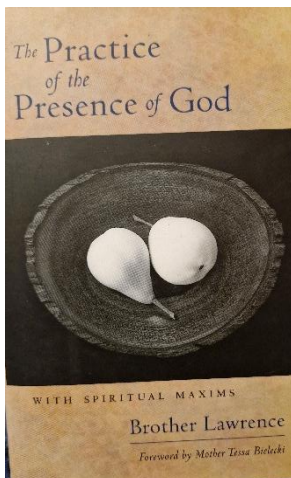
Hilda the Heritage Hedgehog has a trail around the exhibition and if you find all the hedgehogs, there is a small prize.

Jim Causley's concerts have been fabulous, weaving a musical web around the land and people of this area. He has written a song specifically for these Exhibitions on the "Dissenting Voices" theme which is beautiful.

Every exhibition is different with its own unique character. Come and enjoy Bridestowe, Winkleigh and Northlew.

I'm not responsible for my weird ancestors. Quite the reverse.

Lois McMaster Bujold



Book Review

Rev Chris talked about this book in his Covenant sermons at the beginning of the year. It is a classic that every believer should be acquainted with. The joyful and practical teachings of Brother Lawrence, a French monk, have resonated with Christians for more than three hundred years.

It contains letters and conversations about the simple practicality of the Christian life and is a very easy read despite its age.

"Lord of all pots and pans and things... make me a saint by getting meals and washing up the plates!"

Editor's Note

I hope you have enjoyed the Summer edition of the Circuit Newsletter. Sadly I missed the Spring one due to bereavement but there is lots to look forward to in our Autumn edition.

Please take note of the monthly posters sent out to every church and also available online where you will find events around our West Devon Circuit.

Our Circuit is a microcosm of the worldwide Church in the sense that we are diverse in our traditions and customs, diverse in the emphasis we place on different aspects of our faith in practice. Worship, teaching, service, hospitality etc. How do we express what it is to be a Methodist today?

Dissenting Voices was a title for the heritage exhibitions which was thought through carefully and prayerfully. What was it that made our spiritual ancestors different?

The Bible Christians, a branch of Methodism very active in the 1800s were keen on social change. It wasn't enough to attend a service, a person was expected to live differently. Faith meant transformation and individuals collectively had a huge impact on the communities in which they lived.

Revd Helen Cameron said that it's not about numbers, but impact. We see that today in the way lives are being affected through the work of the Church. Many years ago, a chapel might have been built for the benefit of three or four families. People had more children as a rule, and they didn't have transport to get to a church far away. It's not logical to compare then with now, everything is different. However, we face some of the same issues. There are people in need today and there is mission work to be done.

John Bell and Graham Maule of the Iona Community wrote a Pentecost hymn and the last verse says:

*"For she is the Spirit, one with God in essence,
Gifted by the Saviour in eternal love;
She is the key, opening the scriptures,
Enemy of apathy and heavenly dove."*

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