

UPDATE January 2016

Circuit 26/4,
Southampton District



Turning Possibilities into Reality

Circuit Gathering at Christ Church, Woodley
Saturday 20th February, 10am to 3pm

Registration from 9.30am, tea & cake at 3pm but you may arrive and leave at any time. A5 flyers with details of the timetable and parking advice will be sent to the churches, posters available now.

We have an invited speaker, Rev^d Ian Bell. He will be leading two sessions, each with time for group discussion:- Towards the Edge: re-imagining mission for today & At the Edge: pioneering mission for all.

At this circuit event we want to share the resources and skills we have in our churches. There will be information displays. We would like information on the different ways churches get involved with Messy Church or Children's Holiday Clubs, but also about unusual outreach that we possibly haven't heard about.

If your church has an activity that you would like to share, please contact Gill (see over) with information that can be printed and ask your representative, if possible, to be available on the day from 11am to noon in the information & resources area.

At Silchester we have a monthly meeting on a Friday afternoon of about 12 people, some without any other connection to church. Usually we follow a programme of activities associated with gardening but before Christmas at one end of the hall we created:-



More will be revealed on page 2!

A **Level 2 Food Safety** training course has been arranged for **Saturday 30th April** at **St Andrew's** (Western Way, Basingstoke, RG22 5RB) **9.30a.m.** Further information about this will be in the weekly notices. Booking is with me or the Circuit Office. Marianne Sales

NATIVITY LIVE

In three years the number of people participating in Caversham's Christmas Eve event "Nativity Live" has grown to around 300. When Methodist Deacon Becky Lovatt originally launched the first Nativity Live both Methodist churches in the area and St. John's Anglican Church were involved.

This year, for the first time, Caversham Baptist Church was enthusiastically and ably on board too. The event is one which attracts local families who may have no particular church affiliation, but who very much look forward to being part of what feels like a very joyful event.

The starting place was the Baptist Church Car park. A short distance away was the inn where Joseph and Mary were refused admittance until Joseph's pleas at least secured them the stable. Able actors, suitably dressed, from the local churches kept the action moving alongside short carols at occasional stops along the way. The large crowd of two actual ponies, two people in a camel costume, children dressed as donkeys and other characters from the Nativity story followed a flashing star held high for us all to follow. Shepherds, complete with sheep, were gathered in a nearby park until, confronted by angels they, too, moved on to the next location.

Eventually, outside St. John's Church, the very rare phenomenon of as many as three wise men in Caversham were together, speaking of the journey they had been on, coming to its conclusion via nearby Star Road.

Our final resting place was Caversham Methodist Church where a short but significant act of worship took place followed by refreshments.

The worship began with a tableau involving all actors and all who had dressed up for the occasion.

With interest from the Reading Chronicle and Radio Berkshire, good publicity, able acting and musical provision, fine catering, careful detailed planning over the year, safe stewarding, and effective communication the event looks set to continue gathering momentum.

Look out for it on Christmas Eve this year!

David Jenkins



For those of you with a grey scale image, it must be explained that the result on Christmas Day was a very colourful Advent Calendar. The doors had been opened daily revealing A4 pictures, many created in 3D. They were all different, the only guideline being the portrait or landscape requirement

*Is your church going to be part of a special event this Easter?
Please send us details so that we may share your experience across the circuit.*

What do you do on Christmas day in Basingstoke if you are on your own?

Turns out the answer for around 45 people is go to London Street URC church where you will have an excellent dinner, good company and even a present.

The URC in Tadley has held a Christmas day dinner for homeless and those on their own for a few years, and this year it expanded to London Street. Stephen and I were among the 15 volunteers that had the privilege of helping some for whom the Christmas period can be very tough. Among those who came were some who are homeless and staying in short-term accommodation. Others live alone and loneliness on Christmas Day is a tough place to be.

Great credit to Rev'd Kay Blackwell and all the other volunteers from across the churches and community in Basingstoke. The Oasis café at the church is well set up to cater for this sort of number, but it was very impressive seeing the starters, full Christmas dinner, desserts, coffee and mince pies all appearing out of the kitchen hatch right on time and piping hot. Stephen and I had the rather simpler job of serving and hosting on tables. This was a great way for us to share Christmas dinner and become a bit more aware of what life is like for too many in Basingstoke.

Deacon Marlene Skuce

CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP

Do you sometimes wish the order of service could be a little different?

Do you have trouble with some of the new hymn tunes?

Do you enjoy a good sing with other Christians?

Why don't you try visiting us on the last Sunday of the month at Oakridge Methodist Church. The service starts at 6pm? You would be made most welcome. There is tea/coffee and biscuits from 5.30pm.

We start the service by singing a few songs, led by a small music group. This may be followed by prayer, Bible reading, sometimes a spontaneous drama, a talk, or a DVD. This is usually based on a given theme. Then follows a practical time which may be group discussions, making something or reading and meditating on material provided around the room.

The evening closes with prayer and a hymn/worship song at around 7.30pm.

Everything is very informal a mixture of serious and fun, you may stand or sit, take part in as much or as little as you wish. In age we range from the 20's to the 80's.

Come along and try it – you just might be surprised!

Heather Shepherd

Contact Gill;
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Gill on 07990 815282
or send a message to the circuit administrators