



UPDATE

July 2017

Circuit 26/4,
Southampton District

Saturday 10th September Duggy Dug Dug
comes to Tilehurst!

Circuit Gathering in May incorporated the musical Saints Alive.

Here is a view from David Webb:-

I will admit it. I had been looking forward to joining in the Saints Alive scratch performance but when the day came, I wished I had not said yes. Why? Other things that needed to be done; things I did not feel I could leave till another time. But I had said yes, so that was that.

Paul and I had been asked to be narrators and we arrived at Wesley church, Reading and followed the sound of the music to the worship arena. The musicians were only practising, but already it was inviting. The narration was closely linked to the singers so we found them and sat at the back soaking up the words. We went to have our own practice while we waited to link up with singers, and spent some time chatting to other people.

The singers and musicians met together in the worship arena and continued to meld. We sat at the back and the words and music enveloped us and swept us along; they supported and encouraged us. When it came to integrate the narration we were already part of the event. We lived the music, the words and the first Christians each telling us in their own way the story of Acts chapter 2.

And then at 6pm, we enfolded some more people. They were sitting, we were standing; they sang some of the songs, and listened to others. But actually everybody worshipping, telling, listening and sharing the story of Pentecost.

And as I went home, I was still buzzing. Buzzing with the thought that this had been fun, yes; this had been good to be part of, yes; and that God had filled that space.

And I thought about those people 2000 years ago in Jerusalem. I wondered if they had said yes, but when it came to each day, they wanted to opt out from what they had offered. I thought how at Pentecost they got carried away by what was happening around them; and how the other people who just turned up also got carried away. And how what happened then changes us all now.

Before the performance and after viewing our rehearsals, Jane, from Christian Musical Ministries, gave a thought for the day. Here is an extract:-

Humility and positional change; if we look at the story of Jesus we see a picture of positional change: He came down from heaven – from a position of honour, glory, comfort...to a stable on earth. Apart from a comment about being in trouble with his parents for being at the wrong place at the wrong time (in the temple rather than with them heading home) we don't hear him again for 30 years. His ministry is one of being raised up – Baptism ("this is my beloved Son") to wilderness; from praise to disregard; from Palm Sunday to Good Friday; from being raised up on the cross to going to the depths; from the after-Easter appearances to Ascension. Many of his positional changes were misunderstood and criticised. However, his position / relationship with the Father did not change. The moves were not punishment but part of the plan.

When looking at the choir and orchestra we can see similar patterns. There were times when Annie Routley was asking a person to play / sing louder. They were to become more prominent for a while. There were other times that she would ask people not to play or to play quieter. There were times when people were asked to all do the same (in unison) and other times different groups to do different things (harmony), different words at the same time, different melodies. All this was to fit in with the overall plan – to make the music work.

So what was God saying to the choir / church? I felt he was asking some questions.

For some: **Are you willing to step up?** Are you willing to become more prominent than you were expecting? Are you willing to be heard more, seen more, to take a solo / lead part for a while?

For others: **Are you willing to step back?** Are you willing for someone else to take a lead or solo part, not because you have done something wrong, or because I am displeased with you, or you aren't any good or aren't good enough, but because for now it is part of the plan?

For others: **Are you willing to step aside?** Are you willing for others to come alongside you, to join you to sing the same notes as you? Are you willing to make space for new people?

For others: **Are you willing to step behind?** Are you willing to no longer be as visible as someone else takes the place where you have stood, to stand behind them and support them, ready to steady them, ready to catch them when they falter?

God loves each one of us. He has plans, good plans and that does not change when He asks us to move position. He just knows the music better than we do and we have to trust Him to direct us. We may not understand why positions are changing but in time we will see.

Jane Grimshaw

The next Circuit Gathering will be
Saturday 11th November
at Christ Church Chineham.

Old Basing Methodist Church – 150 years old.

At the beginning of June most churches celebrated the Feast of Pentecost. It was, however, a double celebration for our friends at Old Basing as they were also celebrating their 150th anniversary – 150 years of Methodists witnessing and worshipping in this lovely Hampshire village. The members worked hard and the chapel was suitably decorated for the weekend with balloons, potted plants, memorabilia and so on.



On the Saturday afternoon friends and neighbours popped into the chapel for a cream tea and a chat. Some also managed a quick look at their

newly refurbished kitchen. For a good part of the afternoon it was standing room only inside as the chapel was full to bursting.

On the Sunday morning the chapel was again full, this time for a Celebratory Service which was led by the Rev. Richard Tanner, a former Minister at the chapel, and his wife, the Rev. Janet Tanner. During the worship members of the congregation made windmills which they then used to help them pray. Janet shared a story about one of her churches which got down to six members. These members prayed and prayed and put all they had financially into the appointment of a Youth Worker ... that church is now a thriving church with many young families and young people, some of whom have gone on to serve God in the most amazing ways. I felt there was a message in this story, not only for the people of old Basing, but for the members of many of the smaller churches in our Circuit. One of the hymns sung was written for the occasion by another former Minister, the Rev. Jacqui Horton. The weekend culminated with a celebratory lunch which was attended by just under thirty people.



It was indeed a wonderful weekend for the members of this chapel.

Marianne Sales
Circuit Steward with responsibility for Old Basing

Walking with God on Saturday 2nd September at Silchester from 10 am. The day will include a walk with prayer stops and those not wishing to venture out may participate virtually. There will be other quiet activities and displays. Bring your own lunch. In the afternoon, a service of Holy Communion, concluding the day with cream teas.

Three Cheers for our Probationers!

Sunday 25th June was a wonderful day for Ruth and Marlene and for many folk from our Circuit who went either to Birmingham or to Wolverhampton to share with them and support them as they were ordained.

A coach party of 36 was organised from Tadley Silchester and Mortimer to support Rev^d Dr. Ruth Midcalf at St Martin's in the Bull Ring. This church had six bells in 1745 when John Wesley preached outside in the Bull Ring, so the bells were rung in an attempt to drown his voice! The ordination service was presided over by Rev^d Ruth Gee, a past President of Conference and the preacher was Rev^d Dr Sheryl M Anderson, Chair of Liverpool Methodist District and on the Board of Trustees for Action for Children. It was a very moving service.

This was also the service for Rev^d Patrick Stonehewer who had candidated from our circuit along with Rev^d Ruth Lownsborough whose service was held in Coventry Cathedral.

I was at the service for Deacon Marlene Skuce at Darlington Street Methodist Church in Wolverhampton This is a large, old church (apparently built in 1901) with a balcony. On Sunday afternoon it was pretty much full - full of Methodist people who had come to support one or more of the five Deacons from across the Connexion who were being ordained that afternoon, having been received into full Connexion in Birmingham earlier in the day. As to be expected on occasions such as this, there were certain formalities which had to be adhered to, but despite this the atmosphere was relaxed. The hymns were sung with great gusto and the spoken responses were said with real affirmation. The preacher, the Revd Dr. Laurence Graham (President of the Irish Conference), spoke powerfully about the rhythm of meeting God and sharing God and everyone was invited to partake in the sharing of bread and wine. What an occasion!

In true Methodist style tea, coffee and cake were served after the service. Linda and I seem to have a reputation for being the last to leave a church. This occasion was no exception as the doors of the church were locked and we were left waiting for our taxi to take us to the station to catch the train back to Basingstoke.

Marianne Sales

Email your news to
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