



LIGHTING THE WAY

THE ALDERLEY EDGE & KNUTSFORD METHODIST CIRCUIT

MARCH – MAY 2024



“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations” Matthew 28:19

Our Circuit Vision

We believe the Christian faith is fostered in communities of love where Christ is at the centre. We have a desire to work with God’s Spirit to see our Churches grow, to foster new communities of faith, to enable passionate worship, intentional faith development, loving service, and caring mission.

GREETINGS

Dear Friends

“Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to the cross I cling;
Naked, come to thee for dress;
Helpless, look to thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.”

AM Toplady (1740-78)



Photo by Yannick Pulver on Unsplash

Welcome to this new edition of Lighting the Way. During these three months we will be continuing our journey through Lent and then celebrating Easter and much beyond! From May, my journey will take me out of Circuit Life as I begin my Sabbatical for three months. As part of this I will be going on a retreat at St Beunos in North Wales. I will be leaving the regular world of noise and conversation and busyness and entering a week of guided silence and prayer. To some this might sound like luxury. To others a total nightmare!

As we all go through this time, whatever we are doing, we might want to question the meaning in the hymn 'Rock of Ages', from which we have a solitary verse above. As I work out who I am before God, surely I have something to give? And how healthy is it to think of myself or anybody as foul?!

Even as we place ourselves more fully into God's hands doesn't he work through the gifts and graces which he has lavished on us in the first place? As we seek the confidence to share our faith as the people of this Circuit through "Everyone an Evangelist", isn't there something of God working through our characters that helps us to connect with others?

Some years ago there was a brilliant BBC series called "The Monastery" which involved a deep kind of renunciation for five people from very different backgrounds. All of them felt in some way a lack of depth, direction and purpose in their lives. Their shared hope was that their time in the monastery might help. So they entered the unusual rhythm of prayer, silence and work of each monastic day. They were even asked to give up their mobile phones. How hard was that?! All but one agreed.

As the programme unfolded, the inner journeys which they undertook struck a real chord with many people watching on. Our lives revolving around constant communication and information technology have led many of us to be increasingly busy and stressful. Our lives have become often out of kilter. The participants on The Monastery discovered a sense of real freedom and the viewers really got it.

Even the Church is not immune from the worst distractions of the world. We have a tendency to over activity and the need to be successful and relevant. We aren't so good at modelling the view of life which Jesus lived out. He showed us radically different values that help us towards a more authentic way of being in the world.



Photo by Ante Hamersmit on Unsplash

So we all have a need for space - healing, renewing, revitalising space - in which our spirits can be fed and that is not so quenched by the noisy demands of so much of modern life. As we share faith with others this might just be something so counter cultural that it becomes really appealing.

"Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy Cross I cling." Perhaps there is a deep wisdom in these words after all. In learning a new and deep dependence on God we can find real freedom. We can open our eyes and seek out God everywhere and learn to renounce those false idols which we attempt to put in his place and which lead us off down so many blind alleys.

So, in our House and Church Groups and on our own at home, Lent is an invitation to live life differently. To focus on what is most important to us before God and to share that with others!

Lent:
A Season of
Reflection and
Repentance

"For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it." (Mark 8: 35)

Every blessing
Nick

CIRCUIT DIARY



Local Preachers' Meetings.

The next Local Preachers' Meeting will take place on 4th March at 7:30pm at Knutsford.

Circuit Leadership Team Meetings.

The next CLT Meeting will be held on Wed 6th March 2024 at 7:30pm at Knutsford.

Circuit Meeting.

The next Circuit Meeting will take place on Tues 19th March 2024 at 7:30pm at Plumley.

Presbyteral Synod

This will take place on Thursday, 21 March 2024, 9:30am to 3:30pm at Emmanuel Church in Salford.

Circuit Services:



Mid-week Communion Services.

These will be held at 12noon each Thursday. Hosted at Knutsford Methodist Church. All are welcome.



CIRCUIT NOTICES



➤ Circuit Office Contact Details.

My regular work hours are on a Tuesday when I can usually be found at the KMC Church Office. The Circuit Office email address is aeandkcircuit@gmail.com so do drop me an email with any news to share, pieces to include in our newsletter. Jenny Manning

➤ Safeguarding.

As a Circuit, we are working hard to make sure we are compliant in terms of safeguarding training and DBS checks. For those who need DBS checks done, please contact Jenny Bailey or Jenny Manning to set up a time.

There are now opportunities to complete Foundation Module training through an online sessions and the next **upcoming online training dates are 5th March 7pm - 9.30pm, 9th April 1pm - 3.30pm and 25th May 10am - 12.30pm.** Please contact Jenny Manning at aeandkcircuit@gmail.com for more details.

➤ Facebook and website.

You can find additional information and news on the Alderley Edge & Knutsford Circuit Facebook page and on the website <https://alderleyedgeandknutsfordmethodist.org.uk>



- **Please note:** If you include your personal details in an article, then it will be assumed that you are giving consent for these to be included in the newsletter, which may be in the public domain.

CIRCUIT NEWS



What does evangelism *mean* for you?

How has God called you to share your faith with your community?

The next gathering will take place on Monday 22nd April at 7.30pm at Knutsford Methodist Church – do diarise this date.

Sabbatical news.

Rev Nick Thompson will be on sabbatical during May, June and July. For any pastoral concerns, please contact Rev Alan Bradley or Rev Sincere Makunde while he is away.

An exciting opportunity has arisen in Cheshire for a **CHILDREN & SCHOOLS WORKER**

to grow the existing provision with children through the schools and church communities. The successful applicant will work alongside our ministry team finding ways to share God's love with children, young people and their families.

37.5 hours per week
including regular weekend and evening work.

Do you -

Have a passion to see children and young people grow in faith?
Have experience of working with children?
Enjoy sharing your faith and telling the Christian story?
Work on your own initiative & enjoy being part of a team?



We can offer -

Salary of £27,500 (£14.10 per hour) plus pension.
A committed and dedicated team of volunteers.
Opportunities to develop new work and foster a growing children's ministry.

Closing date for applications: 2nd April 2024

Interview date: 20th April 2024

To request an application pack, please email the Circuit Office at aeandkcircuit@gmail.com. Additional details can also be downloaded from the website: www.alderleyedgeandknutsfordmethodist.org.uk or for further information please contact Rev. Alan Bradley on 01565 652251

There is a genuine occupational requirement that the post-holder is a practising Christian who is willing to work within the ethos of the Methodist Church. An enhanced DBS disclosure will be required.

Alderley Edge & Knutsford Circuit
The Methodist Church 
Knutsford Methodist Church, Princess Street. WA16 6BY

'GROWING HEALTHY CHURCHES, ROOTED IN CHRIST'

ADDITIONAL EASTER SERVICES AROUND THE CIRCUIT



Maundy Thursday Circuit Service

Knutsford Methodist Church
28 March 7.30pm



Good Friday

Knutsford Methodist Church
10am
Alderley Edge Methodist Church
10.30am
Plumley Methodist Church
11am
Mobberley Methodist Church
2.30pm
Mottram St Andrew Methodist Church
6pm



Easter Sunday 'Sonrise' Service

'Sonrise' service on The Edge in Alderley Edge, 6.30am. This will be followed by bacon butties at Alderley Edge Methodist Church.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Plumley

Plumley have had a busy few months with beautiful candlelit carol services, coffee mornings, house group meetings and planning for a baptism service. Elizabeth Hall tells us more...



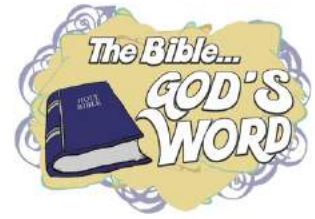
'Christmas has been and gone and now we are in the second month of another year. We had a lovely candlelit carol service in early December led by Rev Sincere with many friends from other churches in the Circuit. The following week we enjoyed a wonderful afternoon of carols and super buffet hosted at the home of two of our

church members. On Christmas Eve we had a candlelit carol service with Holy Communion led by Rev Alan Bradley and Rev Sincere with another well attended congregation.

We shall be having our Good Friday service at 11am led by Rev Sincere and on Easter Sunday a service with Holy Communion, again led by Sincere.

We have recommenced our house group meetings which Rev Sincere is leading at the moment in the church hall. We have agreed to initially work through the 'Talking Jesus' booklet and are meeting every fortnight.

In the New Year we held our first coffee morning of 2024 with a donation to the East Cheshire hospice. We plan to continue with them on the first Saturday of each month. Sincere is enjoying coming along, meeting our friends and helping out as well if required.



Other social events in the coming months have yet to be decided but will be discussed at the forthcoming church council meeting.

Several of our members have sadly suffered ill health or bereavements recently and Rev Sincere and ourselves offer them our prayers and support during difficult times. On a happier note we are looking forward to the baptism of two toddler siblings at the end of February.'

Knutsford

Knutsford Methodist Church is looking forward to their church weekend that takes place at the start of Holy Week. We hear more about this and other news from Dorothy Richards ...

'On behalf of KMC, a Happy New Year to everyone around the Circuit.

The Christmas period, although very busy, was a wonderful time of celebration as we travelled through Advent. We began at the beginning of December in welcoming the Guides and Scouts for their respective services, led by Alan and Sincere. They were a time of fun and worship as the youngsters were reminded of the 'reason for the season'.

Other Advent services including the Carols by Candlelight and Christingle were well supported. It was good to see lots of families from Jolly Tots at the Christingle service. Our Christmas Eve/Christmas Day services were well attended and we had a wonderful time of celebration.



We began our New Year with our morning Covenant Service on 7th January when Sincere led us in worship as we committed ourselves anew to the work to which God has called us.

Our regular meetings have started again including our Coffee Mornings on the last Saturday of the month.

Men's Breakfast (organised by Gavin Taylor) meets several times a year and in between Gavin arranges a walk to Tatton Hall where they enjoy a coffee (and cake no doubt) and a chat before returning home.



During Lent, like other House Groups around the Circuit, House Groups from KMC are engaging with 'Talking Jesus' as part of the 'Everyone an Evangelist' course. We trust that everyone taking part will feel encouraged and more confident in sharing their faith with others.

We are looking forward to the KMC Church Weekend, entitled '**Imagining the Cross**'. This will take place from **Friday 22nd - Sunday 24th March** beginning with a Bring & Share Supper on the Friday evening and ending with a Songs

of Praise on the Sunday evening. In between, on the Saturday, there will be a time of teaching in the morning and workshops in the afternoon. The evening will be given over to 'Rock Solid', the youth group which meets on Wednesday evenings. We are particularly encouraged by this group as, following the launch four months ago, we now have 14 young people attending. Following our Good Friday service, we will be offering Hot Cross buns to people of the town



who 'just happen' to be passing the Church. Hopefully we will be able to have good conversations explaining the story of the Cross. Our Holy Week will end with our celebrations on Easter Day. We pray that during this season of Lent that you will experience a closer walk with Jesus.'



Mobberley

Lynda Mitchell brings us all the news from Mobberley...

'Well hello all, Remember the amazing Wyn Utley who knitted 60 poppies for our Remembrance Service back in November? Well, she has welcomed, no less, an opportunity to knit even more for us – what a lady!! At this rate we might be able to clothe the whole church next November, what a sight that would be. All the Christmas services went very well indeed – all very joyous, but a special mention to the Mobberley Brownies led by Helen Kynnersley and Rev. Nick at their Christingle Service. What enthusiasm, it was wonderful. We give a big thank you to Rev. Nick and Rev. Sincere who led us so well and took us through the Christmas story with a renewed freshness. Café Church is continuing with plenty of discussion on the Biblical passages. Our Wednesday night prayer meetings are continuing to provide a much needed opportunity to pray, quietly and reflectively together. Our numbers are small at the moment but much enjoyed by those who attend. We are now incorporating the 'Talking Jesus' course which promises to be very interesting and we hope more people will come along.



We have just confirmed with 'The Lawrence Singers' a concert to be performed by them on Saturday evening the 22nd June. They are so very good and the programme will be a bright and cheerful one fit for a midsummer eve. Please make a note in your diaries. More information will follow.

And as we look forward to Lent and the Easter Services, we welcome start of Spring. So from all of us at Mobberley:

We hope you have a reflective and enjoyable Lent and may all the lovely snowdrops that are peeping through encourage us to look forward to a beautiful spring. Happy Easter to you all.'

Alderley Edge

Alderley Edge has been on a musical journey over the last 20 years. Jean Walker tells us a little about it...

AEMC and our musical journey

First Movement: Allegro

'It is very nearly 20 years since we arranged the first of our Lunchtime Concerts: an organ recital by two young musicians from Chetham's School of Music in October 2004. It was clear from that very first concert that there was a demand for quality



music in the local community, which did not involve travel to Manchester or venturing out in the evening. A convivial lunch followed by an hour's music had proved to be a winner! We were fortunate to have a remarkable source of musical talent on our doorstep at Chets and the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM), not to mention a building with an outstanding acoustic, but we needed a piano to match the quality of performance that was available to us. Was it luck or divine intervention? Murray McLachlan, Head of Keyboard at Chets, a tutor at the RNCM and a writer and pianist with a world-wide reputation, was the owner of a Yamaha baby grand which needed a home! The instrument was delivered to us at the beginning of 2005 and so began the success story of our Lunchtime Concerts and an enduring working relationship with Murray McLachlan and his family – we have been privileged to watch as three of his children have developed from talented scholars to mature concert pianists in their own right.

Second Movement: Andante

It is well documented that musicians were especially hard-hit during the lockdowns of the Covid pandemic, when opportunities for live performance simply disappeared. In some cases, too, their confidence was affected, and so in 2021 consummate educationalist Murray asked if we could introduce a further series of recitals to give his students the chance to perform to live audiences. And so the Coffee Concerts were added to the mix and they take place on the first Saturday of the month alongside our regular busy Saturday Coffee Morning.



Third Movement: Presto

I am not sure what the collective term is for McLachlans – (perhaps a clan since Murray hails originally from Aberdeen?) but over five weeks from mid-January to mid-February this year, we will have had recitals by no fewer than three members of the family: Murray himself in January, and sons Callum and Matthew performing on 3rd and 21st February respectively! They have each chosen a varied programme of wonderful music to suit all tastes. How blessed are we to have the opportunity to experience these uplifting recitals!

Mottram St Andrew.

Ian Wright shares with us the news from Mottram St Andrew, including a wonderful Local Arrangement service ..

'As always, a look back to the turn of the year or even before. I am pleased to report our Christmas activities went well, and even the



The Over Alderley Band

weather failed to cramp our style. It was good to again welcome the younger pupils from the school who held their Nativity on a couple of

afternoons before Christmas, as well as a visit as part of their curriculum which Rev Nick kindly hosted.

Our other events and Christmas services were all well attended too and we finished the season with a flourish with a LA service of 'Carols of Praise' on Sunday 31st December. Twelve carols in all, some of which we rarely sing but are among the congregations favourites. No organist on this occasion but our 'digi-box' electronic hymnal did us proud and didn't object that the service lasted a bit longer than normal. Refreshments were welcome following on. We did do some singing!

Coming into the New Year we were pleased to welcome Rev Sincere to the chapel to lead our Covenant Service back in January, the first time she has visited us. We look forward to seeing

her again as the Circuit plan cycles through the seasons and returns her to us.'

Back to the present and the future now. We restarted our monthly Coffee Mornings on Saturday February 10th which is coming up in a few days as this is written. These events give us an opportunity to open the chapel and invite others in in a non-formal way and we look forward to welcoming new faces as well as old as the year progresses. Dates to note are the Saturdays of 16th March, 13th April and 18th

May. All of them running from 10am to 12 noon.

Lent

Ash Wednesday is approaching and we are again looking forward to sharing the service here at Mottram with friends from around the Circuit. Easter follows and heralds the spring both in terms of nature and our own spiritual journey. A time to be refreshed perhaps and an opportunity to renew our faith once more in the risen Christ who is always with us.'

*Join us for a coffee morning at
Mottram St Andrew Methodist Church*

Saturdays 16th March, 13th April and 18th May, all from 10am -12 noon

Suggested donation of £3 for a tea or coffee and a teacake



PRAYER IN OUR CIRCUIT

A Prayer for Lent by John Birch

*You were a man of suffering
acquainted with grief,
loved and despised in equal measure.
You understand humanity,
know our failings,
love us despite the people that we are.
When we, like Peter, deny you
by word or action,
forgive us.
When we, like Judas, are tempted
to follow a different path,
forgive us.
When we, like those in the crowd
allow you to be crucified,
forgive us.
Bring us to the foot of the Cross
to stand next to the one who,
looking into your eyes declared
'Surely this is the Son of God'*



NEWS FROM AROUND THE DISTRICT

**Manchester & Stockport District
MWiB Spring Gathering**
Saturday, 2nd March, 10.30 a.m. – 3.15 p.m.
(Coffee served from 10.00 a.m.)



**Methodist Women
in Britain**

for women, for justice, for Christ



Methodist Central Hall
Oldham Street, Manchester M1 1JQ
(Contact [Liz @ lizstuartlp@aol.com](mailto:lizstuartlp@aol.com) for directions)

Speaker and Choir from Women Asylum Seekers Together (WAST)

Please bring your own lunch – drinks provided

All are welcome!



Bible Month Training Day: Genesis

10AM - 3PM / SAT 16 March



Genesis is the starting point for all Christian theology and explores many of the foundational questions of life and faith: Who is God? How does God interact with the world? How is that world meant to be? What does it mean to be human? What does it look like to be God's people?

Join us for a day exploring this book, and get equipped for helping your church discover its many treasures.

BOOK NOW : [BM24-Training.eventbrite.co.uk](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/bm24-training)

Easter Offering 2024 : "Let Justice Roll"

"But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!" Amos 5:24, NIV

Methodist Women in Britain, as a justice-seeking charity, has chosen the theme 'Let Justice Roll' for this year's Easter Offering Service. This **Easter Offering 2024** service tells stories of people standing for justice, persisting in the face of setbacks and taking up the challenge anew as circumstances change.

You can order your printed **Let Justice Roll** resources, including your collection envelopes, via the [Methodist Publishing website](https://www.methodistpublishing.com). In 2023, collections from Easter Offering services raised over £190,000, thanks to the generosity of Methodists. We thank Methodist Women in Britain for running this appeal, and you for making a difference by contributing to God's mission in this way.

A SHORT REFLECTION By Rev Sincere Makunde

*“The people and nations sing praises with one accord,
for this day the King, riding the foal, advances towards the cross,
where He will strike down His enemies.
And thus, the children sing: glory to Thee, the conqueror who has come;
glory to Thee, Christ the Saviour,
glory to Thee, our one blessed God”.*
(Sergius Bulgakov 2008).



In the season of Lent, and as we enter Easter period, let us take time to reflect on the Power of the Cross and what it means to us. As individuals we identify with the Cross differently. For some the Cross is God Himself in His revelation to the world. It is God’s power and glory. Whichever way we identify with the Cross, we are reminded that, God is love, and the Cross is nothing other than God’s love.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16 (NIV)



As we pray this season, let us be reminded that the Cross is the sacrificial character of love, for love is sacrifice, self-surrender and self-renunciation, for the sake of the loved ones. Without sacrifice there is no life in another and for another. The Cross is the exchange of love. The limitlessness of God’s sacrifice for the sake of the world and its salvation which surpasses all human understanding. God demonstrated the depth of His love for humanity by, willingly enduring suffering and death, offering salvation and forgiveness to all who believe in Him. Let this inspire us with gratitude and thanksgiving now and forever more. Amen.

Every blessing
Sincere.



Photo by Rod Long on Unsplash

