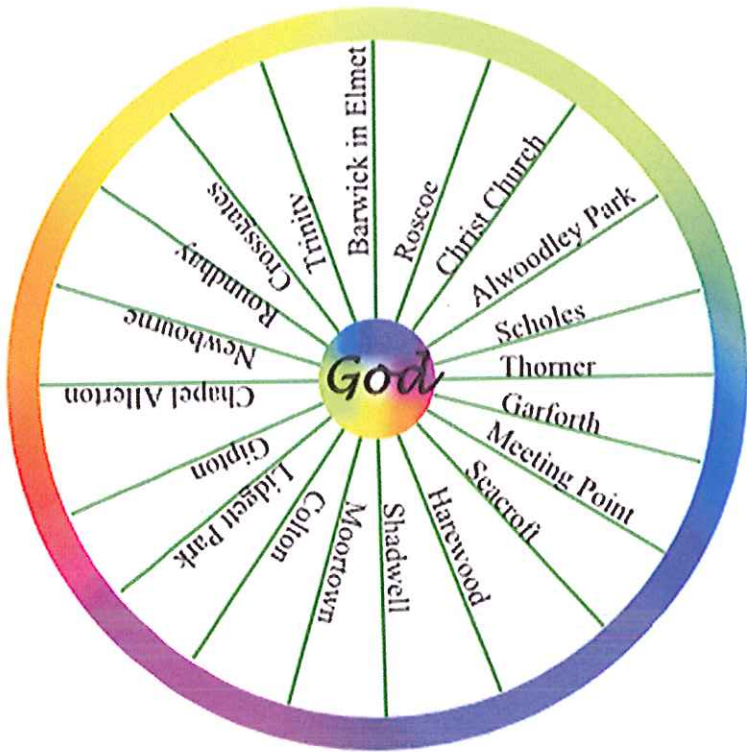


Koinonia 12



Evangelism

Mission, Evangelism, Ecumenism? Which box does this article fit into? Maybe it depends on your perspective.

My perspective is that I have been told I am a “Martha” as opposed to a “Mary”. Maybe, but my view is always that as a church we do what Jesus would do.

My background is in working with people with profound and multiple learning difficulties. This was always in an educational setting, but it gave me a bit of an insight into how people with the highest degree of need are viewed by society, and how much society might need to change to allow people to have the same opportunities as everyone else. Getting a bit philosophical here so let’s get down to the reason I’m writing this note.

Alwoodley Park has had a good record of working with other Christian denominations for a long time. We look at how we can work together in spiritual, relevant and practical ways. We had a cracking Youth Group in the 70s and 80s, moved on to Fair Trade Cafes and jointly instigating one of the Neighbourhood Networks later, and for the past 3 years have organised what began as Dementia Services and became Short Services for anyone who had difficulty participating in a standard length service. St Barnabas has been our ecumenical partner in these events.

Our intention is that all our services should be inclusive for anyone with whatever level of need, which obviously includes people who do attend a standard Sunday service too. There is collaboration with MAECare, who publicise our Special Short Services, and we have built up a bit of a following of people who are experiencing memory loss at a number of levels. A group of people from MHA Moor Allerton attend, and Ted Britton has led many of our services. Transport is available where possible, and we have a number of volunteer drivers. And we do sometimes ring to remind people on the morning of the day of the service. And we have cake!!

Services are simple, happy and traditional. They last for 30-40 minutes, and are followed by tea. They are mainly based on the relevant season, but there have been some particularly poignant Songs of Praise services where people submitted requests for their favourites, and told why the particular hymn had been chosen. Numbers are on the increase, and our last Friday service welcomed over 60 people—more than attended the following Sunday. At the moment we only have 3 per year, but that is because we are all involved in so much else, not because the people who attend are not interested in having more. It's also because there is quite a lot involved in reaching those who are in special need of the services.

We'd like to see this model of provision adopted elsewhere. If this article stimulates you to try something similar in your area, then I'll be pleased. If anyone needs more information, then my Email is in the Circuit Directory. Please get in touch. And if anyone can suggest a better name than "Special Short Service", please let us know!

Margaret Aveyard

*As for you, always be sober-minded,
endure suffering, do the work of an
evangelist, fulfil your ministry"*

1 Timothy 4: 5

*"...for you will be a witness for him to
everyone of what you have seen and
heard." Acts 22:15*

For the past three years I have enjoyed going to a Christian conference at Scarborough the week after Easter, called ECG A Heart for the Nations (ECG- Equipping, Calling and Going). It is held in the Spa Complex over six days. This year it was titled 'INFUSED – Jesus in the blood stream'.

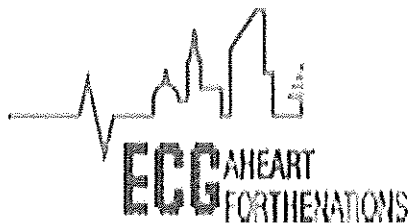
There are lots of sessions to choose from with worship, Bible studies, workshops and celebration, along with some great speakers and encouragers. On the Sunday everyone comes together for a final service in the Grand Hall – hundreds of Christians of all ages from babes in arms to octogenarians. Lively worship with a band and communion. It's great to share being part of something so big and feeling the presence of the Holy Spirit amongst us.

The power of prayer for one another is something so amazing it is difficult to describe.

Hopefully we all come away energised and ready to go back to our own churches and congregations refreshed by the Holy Spirit. I certainly feel this way!

Alison Roberts

***Find out more and book for next year (3rd – 8th April 2018)
at www.ecgevent.org.uk***



Zina's Story

I remember, from being a very young girl, having a thirst for knowledge, always wanting to know 'why' and 'how'?

In my teenage years, seeking answers to some of life's big questions, I decided to look into the 'God business'. I read, I studied, I pestered ministers and priests of several denominations. By the age of 30, looking at all I had learned, I categorically declared that God did not exist, and was a mere imaginary figure, much like Santa Claus. I became a most adamant atheist, and remained so for the next 35 years.

My thirst for knowledge was never however, quenched and I continued reading, learning, asking questions. Then at age 60, having retired, I joined a philosophy class. Here I studied philosophers and philosophies. This included the teachings of Jesus Christ. I found all this very interesting, and was in fact very familiar with Christ's ministry from my earlier studies. But this time there was a huge difference. The familiar words jumped off the pages at me, and embedded themselves in my heart. My intellect was bowled over with the profound, eternal wisdom of what I was reading. I wanted, needed more! Consequently, I stopped the philosophy classes and made bee-line for the local Methodist Church. Why Methodist? I liked the simplicity of chapel rather than the ornate, but beautiful churches of Catholicism or Church of England high church.

Here I came, here I have stayed, and was baptised on Easter Sunday, three years ago. As a Christian, I am very much a work in progress, but feel a 'wholeness' in my heart and feel I have been given a beautiful gift. I know I am in God's hands. I know I always was, even though I denied Him so vociferously in the past.

In my old age, I have come home! *Zina*

Churches Together in East Leeds
A Day with Timothy Radcliffe OP,
entitled 'Summoned by the Lord, Vocation and Conscience'

We enjoyed a wonderful day with Timothy on Saturday 29th April at St. James the Great, Manston. For those who may not know, Timothy is a Dominican Friar who lives at Blackfriars Priory in Oxford. His family is rooted in Yorkshire and he was delighted to be back here. He was educated at Oxford and Paris and he became Master of the Order of Dominicans. He travels the world visiting the brothers and sisters of the Order in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

In the morning session on vocation, he told us stories of his life and how he was a rebellious teenager, nearly expelled from school, but having met and made friends with some Dominican brothers, he realised that this was where his life was leading.

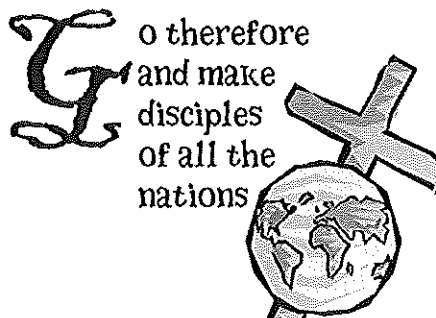
The afternoon session focused on joy although it was titled conscience. He placed emphasis on how we should focus on our young people as the future. They are the hope we need.

He spoke of visits to war torn countries, to camps where displaced and orphaned children were and how, on seeing him in his habit, they rushed to hug him, laughing, happy to see him. He asked what signs of hope we see around us. Messy Church was one example held up, that when children and families come to Messy Church they find joy and fun, but also they learn of Jesus love for them.

We see pictures of despair in the refugee camps and no hope, but listening to Timothy, perhaps we should be shown more pictures of happy children, despite their circumstances, an example of the hope they have that things will improve.

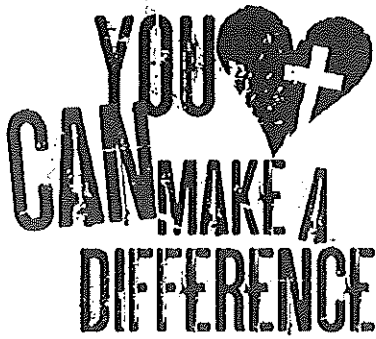
What a privilege it was to listen to this very humble man, who I am sure inspired in us all a feeling of hope and joy for the future.

Yvonne Thornton



Thorner Methodists are involved in the Thorner Village Visiting Scheme which provides a service for those in need in the village whether it is taking folk to hospital for appointments, collecting prescriptions from our dispensing doctors in the village, shopping or visiting the housebound. It is coordinated by a group of volunteers from both St. Peter's parish church and the Methodist church and is our means of

Evangelism in the village providing Christian care to those in need
Ann Johnson



But in your hearts set apart Christ as LORD. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect." 1 Peter 3: 15

Today the word 'mission' conjures up an image of Christians sent to other parts of the world to convert local people to the faith and often introduce a foreign culture at the same time. In fact it originally meant the over-flowing life and love of God. This gives the church its reason and purpose.

Let's keep it simple! We don't know how to share Jesus with others. Let's take a leap of faith and just do it. Pray for the right words – the right moment – and for courage.

Come to the Circuit event on 7th October led by Ashley Cooper for inspiration.

Alison Roberts

'The joy of being a connexional Church where we are planted, not just in local churches but also in circuits and districts, means that opportunities to experience something out of the usual are on our doorstep. So we have no excuse! Let's be a curious people, let's try new things, learn and grow, and find our place in the bigger picture of the kingdom of God, putting ourselves in the way of the Holy Spirit.'

District Mission and Evangelism Facilitator in the Liverpool District, the Revd Rachel Deigh writing in The Connexion

"Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done." Psalm 105: 1

What is evangelism? *It can be an overt attempt to teach others about Jesus Christ and salvation, but it can also be a lifestyle—living our lives simply and in order to draw others to the light of God. Israel was established as a nation to be a blessing and a light to the nations around them, and then draw people to God through their example. Likewise, we should also be salt and light to the world...drawing people to the Lord by our example.*

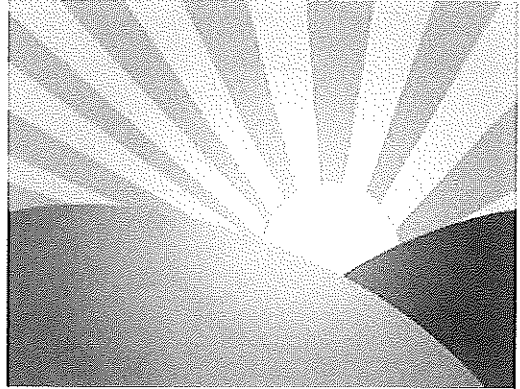
One way to evangelize is to simply live as a light or a shining example of what a Christian represents. God is love, and we should mirror and reflect that love to everyone through our words and even more so in our actions. If we want to tell the world about the good news of Jesus Christ our Lord, let us begin by living as he lived, filled with the fruit of the spirit. This is what will show them what God is like, and true evangelism will overflow from that love.

From Top 7 Verses About Evangelism by Karla Hawkins

The story of light

Be inspired and challenged by the big vision that motivates and energises the Revd Nick Blundell, Mission Enabler for the West Yorkshire District

Once-upon a time God the Creator says, "Let there be light". Jesus the Redeemer says, "I am the light of the world," and tells his disciples to "Let your light shine". St Paul writes that "God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts."¹ Once-



upon-a-time a young man in a dark place receives welcome, care, respect, from Christians. He wants to know where the light he sees in them comes from, he wants to shine like they are shining. Once upon a time the Superintendents of the West Yorkshire District where I serve invite me to work on an evangelism initiative, and my experience and Bible suggest that the language of light has something important to offer. Thus The Story of Light is born. The Story of Light is a district-wide initiative aimed at building confidence in the faith we have to share, and creating for our local churches a season in which to shine. Building confidence is about us helping one another to hear our own stories, to recognise where and when God's light has shone into our lives, where it shines now, and having heard them, to put those stories into words. Confidence is being able to tell the story of light of which we are part. Creating a season in which our churches can shine isn't necessarily about doing more evangelistic stuff (although some will). It is about asking how, through current activities and existing relationships with friends, neighbours, people who use our premises, we can better reflect the light of God's love. Pentecost through to Advent last year was planning. Advent to Easter is preparation – much prayer, some review, and opportunities for learning. Easter to

Pentecost will be time to present, to dare to share the story. Once upon a time, God... For more of the story, including the handbook, visit www.westyorkshiremethodist.org.uk/mission-enabling-team.

1 In order, these Bible quotations are from: Genesis 1:3 (NRSV), John 8:12 (NRSV), Matthew 5:16 (NRSV), 2 Corinthians 4:6 (NIV).

"However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace" Acts 20:24

Tell us how YOU 
SHARE
JESUS

Leeds North and East Circuit Priority – Sharing Jesus

The circuit priority on Sharing Jesus is developing into a range of initiatives to equip and encourage the churches.

A Day Event on Sharing Jesus – Saturday 7th October 2017

The circuit is hosting a day conference on Sharing Jesus – our desire is to provide resources and encouragement to churches and individuals for sharing faith and helping people to discover the good news of Jesus. We have invited an exciting speaker to come and help us explore this. Rev'd Ashley Cooper will be known to people from his ministry with ECG, the Christian convention held the week after Easter each year in Scarborough. He has been Superintendent minister of SwanBank for nine years – a large and growing Methodist church in Stoke on Trent.

Full details of the day are on the back page of this *Koinonia* - please come to all or part of it as you are able. We encourage you please to book in for a place so we know how to cater for everyone at the different sessions. In the morning Ashley will lead us in a workshop to help us as individuals and churches to invite people into faith conversations and to allow ourselves to be used by God so that people we know might meet Jesus in new ways. The afternoon workshops will engage a number of key issues facing us and be led by a range of people from within and outside of the circuit. The day will end with a celebration at which Ashley will be preaching.

Facing the challenges of sharing faith

It was in September 2016 that the circuit meeting decided to make a priority of resourcing the churches to grow in confidence for sharing faith and inviting people to meet and follow Jesus. This has often been described as “evangelism” – perhaps the fact that so many of us are nervous of the word demonstrates some of our problems. Doing “evangelism” can, sadly, be something which is overly forceful, fails to listen and does not really show care for others. As a circuit we are

committed to learning together how to do this well – sharing the good news with others is central to our calling as followers of Jesus. I think that many of us would recognise that of the four ‘Our Calling’ themes of the Methodist Church – Worship, Learning and Caring, Service, and Evangelism – it is evangelism that we struggle with most. To make this weakest part of our ministry our priority is a bold, but I believe wise decision. The discernment that we should focus resources on this grew out of the reviews undertaken by all the churches in 2015, establishing their priorities for the next few years. A common theme was the need to realise the potential of our many strong community relationships, by taking them forward into faith conversations and encounters with Jesus.

Journeying together

A small group, based on the existing team working on one of the previous circuit priorities to explore Fresh Expressions, has been enlarged by other interested ministry staff and circuit officers. An early priority in Summer 2016 was prayer and several prayer meetings helped to shape our thinking on this issue. The circuit prayer meeting on Sharing Jesus continues monthly, though with very low numbers. Please think about supporting this in coming months – it is advertised on the circuit notice sheet. Whether at the meeting or elsewhere, please pray for all that is happening.

We identified in Autumn 2016 that a resourcing day would be helpful, and a number of smaller initiatives to lead towards this. Focus has been given to sharing our personal stories of faith in several circuit united services, which accompanies a move in many churches and by many preachers towards intentionally including faith conversations in services. Research was carried out by this new Sharing Jesus team into group work programmes designed to introduce people to Christian faith, and programmes to equip church members to talk about God more openly. A leaflet was circulated to offer this information and churches have been encouraged to try out a course – lots of new things have been happening! For example:

- Christchurch and Colton have run small groups using the Methodist booklet about confirmation and church membership, *Called by Name*.
- Newbourne has used the Methodist Church course introducing Christian faith called *Compass*.
- Garforth have established new fellowship groups, so far using the book, *Jesus' People: What the Church Should Do Next* by Bishop Steven Croft.
- Meeting Point Extra has used *Table Talk for Easter*.
- Oakwood has continued to offer a course called *Start* for people

There are probably developments I have missed [sorry!] – please let us know what you have been doing in your church, and do get in touch if you want to find out if someone else in the circuit may have some experience and tips to share about an idea you want to explore. There are new stories of people growing in faith and of meeting Jesus in new ways – some are included in this issue of *Koinonia* – we would like to encourage one another more by telling stories like this – please contact the team if you can help.

Going Forward – after 7th October

We hope and pray that our Sharing Jesus day on 7th October will give a focus to all this that is already happening and spark new initiatives and developments. Most of all we pray that it can open those who attend, and through them the churches of this circuit, to new movements and leadings of the Holy Spirit. As followers of Jesus, we are called to invite others into his company, to meet with him and to know his saving grace. As a circuit we are on an exciting path together to take new risks and learn to be better “*ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us.*” (2 Cor 5: 20)

Yours in Christ,
George Bailey and the Sharing Jesus planning team

Saturday 7th October
2017

10am – 4pm

Oakwood Church,
Springwood Rd, Leeds,
LS8 2QA

LEEDS NORTH & EAST CIRCUIT

Sharing

Jesus

A one day conference for encouraging & equipping evangelism
with

Revd Ashley Cooper

Ashley is Superintendent Minister and Senior Pastor at SwanBank, Stoke, where he has spent 9 years developing a strong team. He serves on the ECG executive, a national conference resourcing the wider church



10am – 12pm: training session on
faith sharing

1pm – 2.30pm: practical and
creative workshops on
pressing issues for our local
churches

3pm – 4pm: celebration, with
Ashley Cooper preaching

Come to all or part of the day.

Free food provided.

Book your place with the Circuit Office: 0113 2663 309
circuitoffice@leedsnandemethodist.org.uk