

Chelmsford Circuit

Issue 24

Newsletter Date: January & February 2023



New Year, New Beginning?

At the moment, all around us in the media are the 'end of the year' type reviews and debates. Who's the sports personality of the year? What was the best film of the year, and so on is what I'm constantly hearing on the radio and TV, not to mention the papers, which seem to delight in an annual post mortem of the year!

Do any of these things really matter? So often we spend so much time looking backwards we're not sure what we're doing in the here and now. Or at a time like New Year we look forward with resolutions in our heads and dream of the future. We can easily worry about when we are going to do things but the book of Ecclesiastes reminds us that there is a time for everything:

**There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under heaven:
a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,
a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain,
a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak,**

At a time when it might feel quite a challenge to be positive about the future we do well to remind ourselves that any time is the right time to remember God is with us. The incarnation of Jesus was the perfect illustration of that very wonderful thing.

God is with us NOW, whatever you may be facing – joy or sorrow – God is with us.

Something really worth celebrating I think.

With every blessing,

Mark

Happy New Year!

We have now navigated the busy time of Christmas....although as I type this it is early December and we are still in the full advent season!



I have been moved by a talk I heard and wanted to share with you as it is all about Church as a safe place.

I have led numerous safeguarding courses where we have talked about creating safer spaces, perhaps you have been online with me! However, I wonder what helps you to feel 'safe' when you come into one of the circuit churches?

Is it the welcome? Is it the refreshments? Is it the format of the service? Is it seeing people you know? We all have a range of things that help us to settle and feel safe.

I am curious about whether we feel **truly** safe though, let me explain.

Do you feel the church is a place where you can arrive, as a human who has had a complicated week/ in the midst of an emotionally difficult time/ struggling, and feel seen, heard, understood, cared for? Is Church a place you feel you can come and be looked after? Or is it a place where you have lots of roles and responsibilities? Perhaps it is a place you come to because it is part of your routine and you just need to come and keep in touch. We all come for different reasons and with different things going on.

I think we can all agree that being human is hard and complicated! And this needs saying and recognising. We are also amazing and creative and loved. I am sure we all arrive sometimes and feel like life is too heavy and complicated and we don't want to burden anyone else, so we say "Yes all good thanks". I know I have sometimes.

However, I do believe that as a church we are called to be like a hospital to the broken, a refuge for the weary a safe place for all.

So my thought is this, how do we do this? Perhaps the Church you regularly attend is doing a great job....if so...that's great! Please share with others what you are doing. And if you think there is more to be done.....please share! I would love to have those conversations with you. In this new year, let's be intentional about creating safe places. And let's help each other to do this!

I hope that 2023 is a year of exciting opportunities for you and your families. I look forward to working with you and for you in the year ahead.

God bless,

Esther

safeguarding@chelmsfordcircuit.org.uk

Esther Burton

“Towards One World” and “Seed of Grace”

Update...



You may recall that editions of the Circuit Newsletter have carried articles about our Towards One World initiative at Trinity, linking with the **Seed of Grace project**, which our member, Sheila Mukumba, is promoting.

Briefly, Towards One World, which has been running here for an unbelievable forty-one years, is always alert to hear of localised needs, anywhere around the world, and to commit to finance and to

give other support in order to meet those needs.

Seed of Grace is focused on the poverty in which many Methodist ministers in Zimbabwe live and on the huge distances they must travel to fulfil their ministry, often over difficult terrain and with inadequate vehicles.

We launched the latest phase of Towards One World in mid-December 2021, with the target of raising £4000 over two years in order to purchase twenty bicycles and to hand them over to ministers who needed them. **I am delighted to tell you that, one year later, we have greatly exceeded expectations and have already bought thirty bicycles! This has been possible as, although the number of supporters at Trinity has dwindled, regular donations have kept coming in and the bicycles became available at a cheaper price than was originally envisaged. Our updated target is now to acquire forty of these by mid-December 2023 and maybe even more!**

Sheila is currently with the folk in Zimbabwe and is hoping to do some hands-on work in the distribution of the bicycles. We hope to have a live link-up with her, via Zoom, in one of our coming services. It is planned that she will take over from me as the co-ordinator of Towards One World later this year and, if anyone in the Circuit knows of any need that we might address when this project ends, please get in touch with either Sheila or me to discuss its feasibility.

Jeff Green (01245 420405)

If you would like to offer a donation, we can accept cheques:
Payable to: Trinity Methodist Church. (Please write 'One World' on the back of the cheque). Rainsford Road, Chelmsford CM1 2XB.

DELIGHTFUL IMAGES OF CHRISTMAS AT MOULSHAM LODGE



The eco angel was constructed out of the bottoms of plastic drinks bottles collected through the year by members of our congregation.

Our scrabble wall was decorated to depict the Nativity back at the beginning of Advent at a church craft afternoon.

Our thanks go to Glenda for organising both of these.





**Methodist Women
in Britain**

If you would like Easter Offering envelopes or bookmarks to raise money for the Methodist World Mission Fund, please will you contact Carole Fairclough

on rogerandcarole@hotmail.co.uk or 01245 257983 as soon as possible so she can order them.

Thank you, Maureen Crilley.

MAYBE A POSSIBLE AVENUE OF HOPE AND INSPIRATION?

One Christmas more than twenty years ago, the Superintendent Minister Rev. Bernard told our Junior Church an intriguing story about a Candle maker. In essence, it went something like: a man turns up in a run-down depressed area, and after a few misunderstandings with the locals he sets up a small business making candles.

The light from the candles changed the perspective of the environment and people felt safer going around at night, they could look out for one another, and a community spirit was created which decreased problems of substance abuse, loneliness and poverty.

In the fullness of time, other businesses were set up and there was a gradual move to prosperity and a noticeable reduction in crime. The Candle maker sets up apprentices or encourages similar trades to establish in other depressed areas. Finally, there being nothing challenging remaining, the Candle maker mysteriously disappears, leaving the people in a heightened state of confusion and speculation.

Fast forward now to a modern parallel. Here's a picture taken yesterday of a line-up from somewhere in our Circuit of a significant number of generators, which are now on their way to the Ukraine. Alongside these are parcels of inverters which are used to run gas heating systems from a 12v. battery. The mains power in many parts of the Ukraine is often down for 12 to 22 hours a day. This brings a whole new meaning to: In the bleak mid winter. We hope the generators and inverters change the perspective for the places they arrive at.

Shchlaslyvoho Rizdva

Merry Christmas (in Ukrainian)

John Clemo



BRADWELL PILGRIMAGE
SATURDAY 1ST JULY 2023
BRADWELL ON SEA

Dear All,

We are hoping to encourage more people across Essex and East London (and further afield if wished) to come to the Bradwell Pilgrimage. This year the Pilgrimage is on Saturday 1st July 2023 and is held at Bradwell-on-sea on the Essex coast. We start in the village itself at St Thomas's church and then walk the nearly 2 miles from St Thomas's to the beautiful St Peter's Chapel. It is a truly ecumenical day with a wide variety of people coming and speakers taking part and exciting workshops in the afternoon.

We were hoping you could help us to get this date in Church diaries early, more information about speakers and arrangements for the day will be available in Spring 2023.

If you have any questions or wish to bring a coach, please don't hesitate to contact me. I've also attached an article about the Pilgrimage in 2022 which hopefully gives a flavour of the day.

Many thanks,

Jenny

Jenny Clayton

Ecumenical Lead (Essex)

Churches Together in Essex & East London (CTEEL)

07796 393131

www.cteel.org.uk

<https://www.facebook.com/ChurchesTogetherEEL>



Bradwell Pilgrimage & Gathering



In July each year churches from across Essex and East London pilgrimage to one of the oldest Christian churches in England, St. Peter-on-the-wall. A Saxon chapel built by St. Cedd on a Roman military station of Othona in AD654 at Bradwell-on-Sea.



The day begun at St Thomas' church with a service outside in the sun. Bishop Alan, Roman Catholic Bishop of Brentwood, addressed Pilgrims and Bishop John, Anglican Bishop of Bradwell commissioned Pilgrims for their walk of a little under 2 miles to St Peter's Chapel.



Following the walk, Rev Steven Poss led Opening Worship time with music provided by the Salvation Army band. Bishop Guli, Anglican Diocesan Bishop of Chelmsford, reflected on how we should manage our time differently not necessarily the most efficiently but effectively for God.

This year the theme was the Environment and a number of workshops were run during the afternoon, including a tour of the Renewables at the Othona Community, Eco craft activities, a Prayer gallery focussed on environmental issues and a Eucharist service in the Chapel.



The day closed with worship led by Richard Sanders from the Othona community and a message from the Archdeacon of Chelmsford, Elizabeth Snowden about our environmental responsibilities as stewards of God's creation. Accompanied by a Worship band led by Rev Dan Pierce.



We are grateful to everyone who helped in any way towards creating such a warm and welcoming atmosphere and a special Pilgrimage journey together.



The Pilgrimage is always a real Ecumenical witness and has been supported by St Thomas' Parish Church, the Peace Place Trust, the Othona Community, The Salvation Army, Religious Society of Friends, Roman Catholic Diocese of Brentwood, Anglican Diocese of Chelmsford, Street Pastors, the United Reformed Church, Eastern Baptist Association each contributing to the success of the day.

Next year the Pilgrimage will take place on Saturday 1st July 2023, please do come and join us for a special day at a beautiful location.

For more information contact Jenny Clayton, Ecumenical Lead for Essex for Churches Together in Essex & East London (CTEEL)

Email: jenny.clayton@cteel.org.uk

Website: www.cteel.org.uk

For more on the Bradwell Pilgrimage, see www.bradwellpilgrimage.co.uk and to keep in touch with plans for 2023 follow us:



Facebook.com/BradwellPilgrimage



Twitter.com/BradwellPilgrim



From the end of this month (January 2023) and through February and March Chelmsford Methodist Circuit is running the Bible Course.

There will be three opportunities to participate in this programme devised by the Bible Society.

TUESDAY JANUARY 31ST 2023

Zoom course will start at 7:30pm for nine weeks

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 1ST 2023

Face to face course will start at 2pm in the Carol Evans Room at Trinity Methodist Church In Chelmsford for nine weeks

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 2ND 2023

An alternative Zoom course will start at 7:30pm for nine weeks

Two Zoom dates are offered each week to allow participants to attend an alternative session if they have another engagement on their first choice night

Please contact Mike Fogg to register your interest in joining the Bible Course.

Mike's contact details are below:

Tel 01245-328337 email: Mikefogg@btinternet.com

NEWS FROM MOULSHAM LODGE

Are you warm enough??

As the restrictions for Covid have been gently eased -the weather had dominated our attention with the extreme hot dry weather earlier – almost drought conditions, then the rains, and now in December the very cold, icy and frosty days. This together with the pressures of the rising in the general cost of living brings with it the concerns, especially for the elderly, the lonely and vulnerable – having difficulty in coping. Sadly there are many who are faced with the problem of “**Heat or Eat**”?

Organisations and churches, are being urged to find ways of at least providing a “**Warm place**” - where people can meet in the warmth and to share socially.

With this in mind , at Moulsham volunteers have established our “ Thermal Thursdays each Thursday through to the end of February This will extend the usual Coffee Morning now from 10.00 am 'till 4 pm offering coffee , refreshments, even light lunches and the chance to chat and maybe share in table games, some art and crafts – and just 'to be' - in the warmth.

Otherwise the year has been quite busy as meetings and organisations get back together again after the Covid 'lockdowns'. The Boys & Girls Brigades are now meeting as usual, and thanks are due to the leaders for keeping in touch with their members through zoom, and outside gatherings during lockdowns.

Our Tuesday afternoon Bible studies have met on alternate weeks now followed by the weekly Advent Course themed around the famous hymn “**O Come, O Come Emmanuel**” led by Glenda Griffin and shared with friends from St. Lukes

In October for our Harvest Thanksgiving we celebrated the rededication of the Brigades and the work of the **Baby Basics team**. At the end of November we shared with other Chelmsford Methodist churches in the Advent Carol Service at Trinity.

Our **Annual Gift Service** on 4th. December was in aid of Food Bank, and led by Sue Johnson where she explained something of how the Warehouse and distribution centres work – we saw an excellent video of the work inside the very busy Beehive Lane warehouse. Sue said that it is through peoples’ generosity that Foodbank is able to help those in need, not just at Christmas, but throughout the year.

On Sunday 18th December at 11.00 a.m. we are holding our **Carol Service** that will be led by Rev. Mark Pengelly and the leaders of the Zimbabwean Methodist Church that meets at Moulsham each Sunday afternoon. Afterwards we will meet together for a shared buffet lunch. Our Christmas Day Service will be at 10.00 a.m. Led by Jim Lowe – there will be no service at Moulsham on Sunday 1st January except an 'On Line' service at 10.00 a.m. Plans are in hand for more shared Service with our friends at St. Lukes.

Peter Robb

The Lord is my Shepherd, I have all that I need.....'

Psalm 23:1 NLT.

Dear Friends

Was there ever a Shepherd greater than the One being described here? A Shepherd who understands us so perfectly, who cares for us so deeply, who loves us so completely? The answer, surely, has to be a resounding & categoric, no! Especially in light of this particular Shepherd's extraordinary ability not only to meet us @ our every point of need but also, in accordance with His perfect timing, to meet such needs in full! Nb. Not when we think He should but when He knows He must! As C. H. Spurgeon wisely & helpfully states -

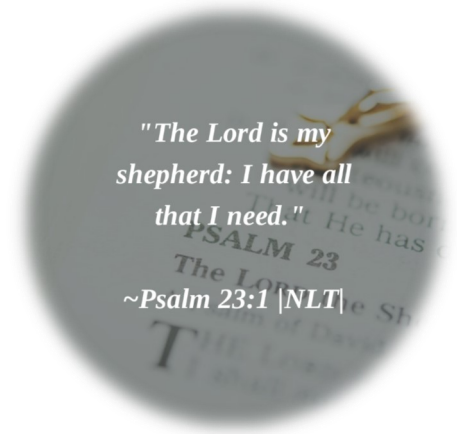
'What a serene & quiet life might you lead if you would leave providing to the God of providence! With a little oil in the cruse & a handful of meal in the barrel, Elijah outlived the famine & you will do the same. If God cares for you, why need you care too? Can you trust Him for your soul & not for your body? He has never refused to bear your burdens. He has never fainted under their weight. Come, then, soul! Have done with fretful care & leave all thy concerns in the hand of a gracious God.'

The day that our dear friend Rosemary Smith died was a bittersweet time for us all. A time not only to give thanks for the countless many lives she'd blessed & touched during the course of her, 'prayer based,' ministry @ Sible Hedingham Baptist Fellowship, where I was a fledgling member but also a time to reflect on the spiritual vacuum left behind in the wake of her death & how & by whom that vacuum might be filled?

Of course, we need not have concerned ourselves unduly, since true spiritual investment, in due course, always reaps a rich return. I.e., Followers becoming leaders in their own right, thus ensuring Rosemary's legacy of loving encouragement & faith filled, godly counsel, continue to live on. Why am I telling you this? Because a few days before she died, Rosemary sent us a postcard, which we didn't receive until the day after her death. On the back of the postcard, she reflected on how, 'happy she was, in Jesus,' despite being terminally ill. On the front of the postcard was a picture of an open field, a few sheep dotted about the place & in the bottom right-hand corner, the words, ***'the Lord will provide.'*** A direct quote from Genesis 50:22 which references the moment when Joseph, now governor of the whole of Egypt, comes face to face with his family & in love & forgiveness, rescues them, completely, from the crippling plight of their material circumstances.

The card, still housed in the original picture frame in which we placed it, over forty years ago, is a continuing reminder of God's love & faithfulness throughout the years. I.e., His promise to provide @ every stage of our lives, come what may. His assurance that, with this particular Good Shepherd @ the helm of our lives, we really will want for nothing!

***With love from us all here @ Christ Church,
John.***



The Essex Course in Spiritual Direction: September 2023-June 2025

Spiritual Direction is a one-to-one ministry of prayer and listening. The Essex Course in Spiritual Direction (**previously known as the Pleshey Course**) has run for over thirty years and provides the core skills and experience to prepare participants to offer the ministry of Spiritual Direction or some form of Christian accompaniment in their various contexts. This is an experiential course which runs over two academic years and consists of regular Thursday evening online sessions on Zoom with nine course days and two retreat days held on Saturdays at The Schoolroom and Chapel, Woodham Ferrers, near Chelmsford. The course will help participants to grow in spiritual depth as they engage with others and discover more of their own journey with God. It is designed for mature Christians who already have experience of receiving some form of Spiritual Direction or accompaniment and who wish to explore and discern God's call to offer this valuable ministry to others. Alongside online and in-person sessions, material will be provided for personal reflection and prayer.

Most people who successfully complete the course go on to offer one-to-one accompaniment, but the art of Spiritual Direction and its practice of deep prayerful listening can impact many other aspects of a person's life and calling, such as traditional church ministry, pioneering and church planting, chaplaincy, missional activities, facilitating small groups, prayer ministry and pastoral care, as well as deepening one's own spiritual life.

Applications are now open and close on **Friday March 17th, 2023**. Please visit our [Contacts page](#) for details of how to request an application form. The course is for both lay and ordained people.

AN ECUMENICAL COURSE

The course is offered on behalf of the Essex and East London ecumenical network for Spiritual Direction and after successful completion of the course participants are eligible to be added to the network's list of Spiritual Directors. The course is recognised by the Anglican and Catholic dioceses in Essex and the Baptist and Methodist regional leadership.

Both the members of the Core Group and the participants on the course have always come from a variety of Christian denominations and traditions.

LOCATION

The Schoolroom and Chapel in Woodham Ferrers is near Chelmsford and is easily accessible from the A12 and A130. It has plenty of parking and also has nearby public transport links. The Chapel has a strong ethos of hospitality and welcome and there are outdoor spaces and nearby walks to enjoy.

For more information or to request an application form please visit:

www.spiritualdirectionessex.co.uk



the “Glow” event at RHS Hyde Hall in the
Last week of November 2022!!

Mike Fogg

*Rest
in
Peace*

**We sadly lost Peter Batey from Hall Street
Methodist Church on 22nd December 2022.
Our thoughts and prayers are with his family.
Funeral Tuesday 24th January 1.30pm
Chelmsford Crematorium and refreshments at The
Secret Garden Tea Rooms.**



At the Ministerial Synod of the London North-East District 2001 I asked for - and was granted - permission to "sit down" from active Circuit ministry. This was a year earlier than had been anticipated when I had been invited to the Waltham Forest Circuit in 1997, but the timing was right both for the Circuit (which was considering how to reduce its costs) and for family reasons. Our daughter's relationship had ended, leaving her with two young sons and no home. We took



our grandsons (one of primary age, the other in early years) into the manse. They attended school in South Chingford until their mother could find a new home. She was accepted on the Housing List of Braintree District Council and was eventually offered social housing. The boys stayed with us while this was being resolved. In 2001 Pam and I were able to move back to Braintree, to our present home, not far from the new home of our daughter and grandsons. Once again we were blessed through the experience of a timely resolution of a difficult situation.

But was this move to be retirement? Or a call to new ways of serving? In my 7th Reminiscence I quoted the Yiddish saying "Der mentsh trakht und Gott lakht" ("Man plans and God laughs"). Before 6 months of "retirement" had passed, I received a phone call from the District Chair. The Colchester Circuit had ministerial staff problems through ill health and a lack of active supernumeraries. Would I be willing to meet the Circuit Stewards to consider in what ways I could offer some part-time support? As a result, I was to assist the Colchester Circuit pastorally for two days a week in addition to Plan appointments. The last act of worship I led in that Circuit was at Castle Methodist Church on June 28th, 2015, the text being Mark 5:34, the healing of the woman who touched the hem of Christ's cloak. We too can be part of that hem.

But as if that were not enough, I was led to two other areas of service. The first was with the Essex Churches Council for Industry and Commerce, as lead chaplain for Workplace Chaplaincy in Braintree. Once again, my previous experiences of industry and commerce were being combined with my experience of ministry. My particular role was as chaplain to the staff of Braintree District Council (BDC), which I continued for several years until, as I approached my mid 70's, I was beginning to find it too much for me. I was able to "pass the baton" to Father Tim Barnes, priest at St. Peters in the Fields, Bocking.

Another area of service developed from an initiative of Braintree District Council in 2009, which expressed a preference for having a single point of contact for seeking the views of Faith groups. As a result of a meeting held at Causeway House (the offices of BDC), Braintree District Interfaith Forum was established. The inaugural General Meeting was on June 8th, 2010, attended by 26 people representing the Baha'i, Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh faiths. I became secretary of B-Diff in 2012.



In the same way that I had felt that God had called me to be actively involved in ecumenical relationships between churches, I now recalled the longing stirred in me during ordination training to know more about other faiths and those who live by them. A Sikh school

teacher had shared with us students what her faith meant to her and how it influenced her work as a teacher. I felt challenged - could I describe my faith as being as meaningful to me as her faith is to her? On another occasion we students were taken to a Buddhist Monastery for a time of challenging questions and discussion with the abbot.

During my active Circuit ministry, I had little opportunity to explore relationships between faiths until my time in South Chingford (Waltham Forest Circuit 1997-2001). One day I received a phone call from a man who asked, "Would my wife be allowed to come to South Chingford Methodist Church for services?". Clearly there was a story behind the question. I replied "Of course; she would be very welcome. May I visit you both?" He asked another question: "Would I be allowed to come with her?" I said "Of course: you would both be made very welcome". A pause followed before he said "We have recently settled here from Sierra Leone. She was a Methodist there – but I am a Muslim". I visited them, and they were made very welcome by the congregation. She became a member of the church; he made it clear he remained a Muslim, while deeply grateful for the welcome they had both received. We shared many interesting exchanges.

And so it was that in 2010 I gladly embraced the opportunity to be actively involved in the Interfaith movement. At no time since have I found my Christian faith being weakened. Instead, as I shared with others what I have experienced and what I believe has been God's call to me, and as I have listened to friends of other faiths speak of their experiences and convictions, I have become certain that God's love for his creation and for humanity is wider than any of us can ever begin to comprehend. The barriers that separate us are not God's barriers.

Of course, I have been challenged – Scripture has been quoted to me, particularly the words of John's Gospel ch. 14 v6, to make it clear how wrong I am. But I recall how often in the Gospels we find Jesus warmly welcoming those whose backgrounds differed from his. The parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) is a powerful example of Jesus holding such a person before others as an example to follow. Are the words of John 14:6 meant as a dire warning – or as a beautiful promise? During the summer of 2022, during a shopping trip to Chelmsford, I took the opportunity to sit quietly in Chelmsford Cathedral, as I had often done during lunch breaks many years before while working at Marconi's in New Street. As I watched many people walk quietly through the Cathedral (people of varying nationalities and perhaps of various faiths or no faith), I saw the spectrum of light from stained glass windows falling on all of them. The thought came to me – "Who am I to judge who is or is not beloved of God?". I remembered walking in a busy London shopping street many years before, when a bus went past which carried an advertisement for Christian Radio: "God is on our side". What might those words mean to the many different people on the pavement around me? Did they mean "God is on OUR side – the side that holds the same understanding as us", or was it an all-embracing welcome – God reaches out to ALL? Then another memory came to me from my time as a minister in the London Forest Circuit. Efforts were being made to revive the lapsed practice of a united Good Friday Walk of Witness. I visited a minister of a well-established free church denomination to invite him and his congregation to take part. He left me in no doubt that he had no intention of sharing in anything which involved Methodists, because of our heretical non-scriptural Arminian views of human free-will, denying the total sovereignty of God. He would strongly discourage his congregation from any involvement. Was that a barrier which God has erected?

This will be the last of my series of Reminiscences. If you have read them all, I hope you have found some value within them as I have tried to express the ways in which I have felt, and still feel, that God has been guiding me in all the experiences of a life which is now approaching the upper 80's. I end with the words of a verse from a hymn by Frederick William Faber (STF416; H&P230), words which have encouraged me for many years:

For the love of God is broader than the measure of the mind;
and the heart of the eternal is most wonderfully kind.

David Dickens

December 2022



Methodist success in Eco Church Awards

More Methodist churches are signing up to be part of the Eco Church award scheme operated by A Rocha UK.



Participation in the Eco Church awards for the 12 months until June 2022 shows an increase of 70 percent for Methodist Churches over the previous year. In that period, 94 churches achieved a Bronze award, 28 churches achieved a Silver award and one, the Methodist / URC Emmanuel Church in Bungay in the East Anglia District, received a Gold award.

There are now more than 640 Methodist and LEP churches registered for Eco Church, with four churches having achieved Gold.

The Eco Church award scheme is a national community of churches from all denominations addressing the environmental crisis, using a common framework, an online toolkit of resources and the award survey, as well as learning and speaking up together.

Three award levels of Bronze, Silver and Gold encourage churches to engage more deeply with the environment within worship and teaching, buildings and land management, community and global engagement and lifestyle. The awards are not an end, but a means to help churches embed caring for creation across every area of church life.

Jude Levermore, Head of Mission at the Methodist Church, commented, "Living sustainably is an essential part of our calling, which we are living out in the context of a global climate emergency. The Methodist Conference has committed our Church to achieve net-zero emissions by 2030 and the increasing number of Gold and Silver Eco churches are leading the way. It is great to see how Eco Church is inspiring action in our churches and bringing people together. Eco Church will be an important part of the Methodist 'Hope in Action' agenda over the coming years."

The Bristol District is the first district to have been awarded an Eco District Bronze award. This has been achieved with various initiatives, including churches setting a baseline for their carbon footprints, using the land around buildings to benefit the environment and engaging with political action to protect and restore the planet. There has also been a dramatic reduction in district business mileage from 250,000 miles a year to around 70,000.

Jonathan Pye, Chair of Bristol District, commented, "We are delighted that the Bristol Methodist District, led by our Bristol Eco District Team, is the first Methodist district to gain a national bronze Eco District Award.

"The Bristol Methodist District is committed to living responsibly by ecological principles. We want to encourage individuals, churches and Circuits, and the District as a whole, to respond in appropriate ways to the ongoing climate emergency. We not only seek to achieve our own net-zero carbon targets, in line with the Methodist Conference but set an example to others in wider society to do so, too."

Helen Stephens, Church Relations Manager from A Rocha UK, commented; "Awareness of the deepening climate and biodiversity crises has been brought into searing focus by the summer heatwave, but together, the Methodist Church and A Rocha UK's Eco Church programme offer a hopeful way to respond to the environmental crisis.

"There is something each one of us can do to help change the course that we're on. And it needs every one of us to do something. If we want to grow future generations in our churches, then the environment is one of the biggest priorities on which they want to see action.



Our Circuit ECO journey so far

There is no doubt climate change has become the most important issue facing our planet and the clock is ticking. As a Circuit we have committed to playing our part in helping to slow down the rising temperatures because we believe it is what God is calling us to do as stewards of creation. A recent Tear Fund survey conducted amongst young people in churches discovered that 9 out of 10 young people surveyed were concerned about climate change but only 1 in 10 believe their church is doing enough about it. If it matters to our young people - it should matter to all of us.

We are making progress. The Circuit has appointed a Circuit Steward with responsibility for ECO issues (me!).

We currently have

3 churches with Bronze Awards : Broomfield, Moulsham Lodge and Trinity and

3 churches that have registered and are working towards their Bronze Award : Maldon, St Augustines Springfield and South Woodham Ferrers.

We are also working towards the Circuit ECO church award and hope to be able to apply for that in the next year. Awards are only the beginning and we need to ensure that we don't sit back and rest on our laurels but keep finding new ways to keep 1.5 alive.

On a personal note, some of you may remember that at the beginning of 2022 I started to crochet a temperature blanket. Different temperatures were assigned different colours and I crocheted a row each day. Some of you have asked how the blanket is looking. The blanket stopped abruptly in July. We hit temperatures of 40 degrees and this had a great impact on me. I had taken on this project without really thinking about what I was doing. I edged the day my granddaughter was born in April with gold. I enjoyed taking notice of the temperatures and choosing the colours each day. But when 40 degrees hit I knew that I could not continue. I had a reality check. This project had become a record of what felt like our failure to prevent a climate catastrophe. I don't know whether the project will ever be finished but I do know that we must never stop trying to save our planet.

Sheridan Pengelly

NEWS FROM BROOMFIELD METHODIST CHURCH



Eco Church Update

We are delighted to share with you that, since September, we have raised enough money to twin all six toilets on our church premises. But we are not stopping there! We aim to carry on fund raising and twin as many toilets in Broomfield village as we can, starting with the village hall. To raise awareness further we are devoting our February Messy Church to toilet twinning. This will give us the opportunity to explain why we are so enthusiastic about this project as well as encouraging to get them on board with fund raising too. As far as craft activities are concerned there are so many things you can make with loo rolls!!

Our Eco Christmas Tree

We were invited to take part in the village Christmas tree festival at the village hall, and we decided that this



was another opportunity to raise our profile as an eco church. A Christmas tree was made out of wooden palettes and decorated with decorations made out of sustainable or recycled materials. The decorations reflected the Christian message of love, hope, peace and joy as well as our outreach into the local community and beyond. Tools depicted our sending of pre loved tools to TWAM for refurbishment to be transported to folk in several counties in Africa, to enable them to start up businesses. Blanket squares symbolised the opening up of the church as a warm space this winter as well as making blankets for the neo natal unit at Great Ormand Street. Food filled the crib at the base of the tree reflecting our support of the Foodbank with donations of food as well as volunteering in the centres themselves. We were able to promote our toilet twinning project and candles made of loo rolls also adorned the tree. The tree was carefully dismantled after the village hall event and then re erected in the porch of the church and was much admired by visitors. We are very proud that we have a certificate to show we were voted the best tree and are grateful to the Broomfield Parish Council who presented us with £20 for our charity.

Outreach into the Community

At our Christmas Messy Church our families were invited to visit 6 tables with each table

depicting a part of the nativity story. Each child was given a Christmas story booklet and at each station the children collected stickers to illustrate each stage of the story in their booklet. Each family then had their own Christmas book to share with family and friends. Some children dressed up as nativity characters to take part in the trail, and great fun was had by all!!



There were the usual food bags, tea and cake for the adults and six craft activities to complete and take home including a lollipop angel, a baby Jesus hanging decoration, and a candy cane, made out of beads, for the Christmas tree.



Baby Bereavement Support Group.

The church on a Friday evening just before Christmas for families to come and have a quiet time to reflect on the pain of their loss by lighting a candle to remember their babies. The church was bathed in candlelight and quiet music filled the church.



We are delighted that these families also find comfort in visiting our small peace garden at the back of the church hall. This is a quiet space for all those who have experienced loss in the village to find space to

remember, and find comfort and peace. If you would like more details about the garden or the Broomfield Baby Bereavement Support Group then please contact Dianne Hodgkinson.

Carol Singing

We were delighted to be invited to lead the singing of carols in the village hall car park at the Christmas Tree Festival event.



Many thanks for all those who have supported the Circuit Newsletter by sending in articles and sharing the newsletter with colleagues, friends and family.

I really appreciate your support. God Bless you all.

Karen



The next Circuit Meeting is on
Wednesday 8th February 2023

Gt Notley CM77 7GN

7.15pm for 7.30pm

Zoom will be available—contact the Circuit Administrator

Circuit Administrator: Karen Murrell.

Email: karen.murrell@chelmsfordcircuit.org.uk

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'Share your news'
Deadline for
March/ April 23
to Karen by Mid
February at latest.