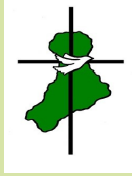




THE GREEN SOCK



NEWS FROM THE SHROPSHIRE AND MARCHES METHODIST CIRCUIT

DEC 2020

CIRCUIT MEETING USHERS IN FUTURE CHURCH

The final Circuit Meeting of 2020 opened a formal discussion of the Circuit's long-term future. Addressing the meeting which was hosted on Zoom with a significantly reduced number than would attend physically, Circuit Superintendent Revd. Richard Hall stated that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a "massive impact on the way that we work" accelerating the need for change. This, he said, plus proposed Tax Law changes that come into effect in 2021, dictate that urgent conversations around trusteeship and governance must be had. The law will require all churches with an income of over £5000 per annum to register independently with the Charity Commission. The Circuit-wide conversations will enable churches to fully consider what registration entails in both preparation and in what will be required of Church Councils annually.

Not unrelated is the reorganisation of the Methodist Church and the Connexional push for a more efficient use of resources. "The church's system of governance no longer suits the purposes." Revd. Hall stated adding, "(Currently,) there's also no capacity to engage properly with mission." Streamlining, he said would free up resources to enable further mission possibilities. Key to this Connexional restructuring is a report to Conference 2020 recommending that the minimum number of church members required for a church to remain viable (currently six,) be raised to twenty-five. Although no decision was made, the recommendation will be revisited, and it is likely that the increase will dramatically impact upon the Shropshire and Marches Circuit.

In August, Revd. Hall released two video messages on *Preparing for Change*. In the first message, "Why should we change?" he asserted that while practical decisions must be made, it is the fundamental, core values and purposes of rural Methodism that define and shape our approach to change. Highlighting the Circuit's achievements in providing and maintaining alternative ways of worship and connecting with local communities during lockdown, he urged that God's presence with us will similarly overcome the challenges these changes will bring. Commenting on the report, Revd. Hall said, "We can take it as certain that some change will be enacted which raises the minimum size of church from six to a something significantly larger. There is an inevitability about that change, and we need to think about how we're going to respond to it."

He referenced the Circuit's 2017 Vision for a reduction to thirty churches, suggesting that the change might be even more radical: a future Circuit comprising ten or fifteen "multi-site churches with a range of patterns but with a consistency of approach -one church with a single Church Council and one set of accounts". Citing the Minsterley Cluster reshaping as Rae Valley Methodist Society, the team ministry in the north of the Circuit taking worship outside church walls as *Mission Through Music*, *Tiny Church* and *Forest Church* and ecumenical ventures at Tenbury Wells and Cleobury Mortimer among a host of new things churches are initiating, Revd. Hall reassured the meeting of the purpose of changing as a "body of Methodists, to be better equipped to serve the communities in which we've been placed and to make the Good News that God has given us more widely known."

Revd. Hall acknowledged the complexities involved in providing all congregations and members the opportunity to participate in discussions and assured the meeting that COVID-19 restrictions permitting, discussion groups will take place both in person in various venues and online. He also noted suggestions from the meeting that discussions should take place in small groups and that the process of gathering peoples' thoughts in a relatively short time frame, particularly during the pandemic would need sensitive planning. Further details will be released from the Circuit Office in due course.

Watch *Preparing for Change Pts 1 & 2* on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/7CNcrCtKMLs> and <https://youtu.be/s8KUEEHNgcE>

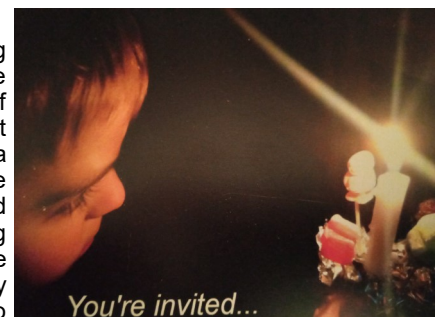
CHRISTMAS ACROSS THE CIRCUIT

CHRISTINGLE AT CRAVEN ARMS

Craven Arms, like so many other churches, finds itself in the position this year of not being able to offer the usual Christmas worship to the local community. One victim of this is the traditional Christingle service. As we still wanted to offer something to the families of Craven Arms we decided (along with our friends at St John the Baptist, Stokesay) to offer a 'Christingle in a Bag', co-ordinated by lay worker Kathryn Lewis. On the 7th December people from Craven Arms met up and delivered postcards to the homes in the town, inviting people to come and collect a Christingle. It wasn't the nicest of mornings weather wise – cold, wet and very grey, yet we were glad to be able to offer something to our local community at this time.



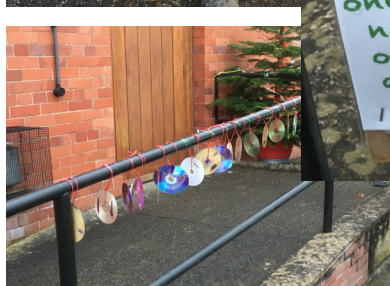
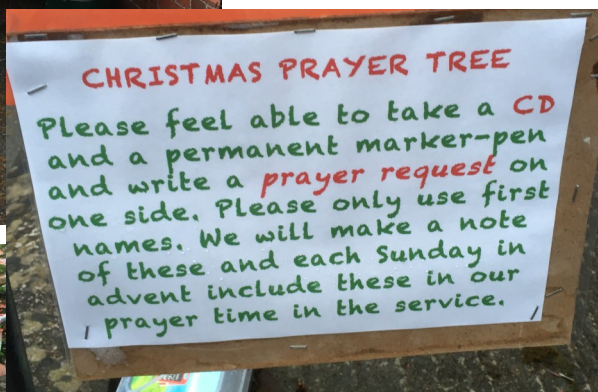
(l-r) Kathryn Lewis with Claire and Philip Harmer who accompanied Revd. Heinz handing out invites



Walking around the streets also provided us with a good opportunity to pray for our town and the people who live there. On 16th December a table will be set up outside Craven Arms Methodist Church. Families are invited to come and collect a bag containing all the parts to make a Christingle as well as a leaflet explaining it all.

Revd. George Heinz

CHRISTMAS PRAYER TREE AT KNIGHTON CHAPEL

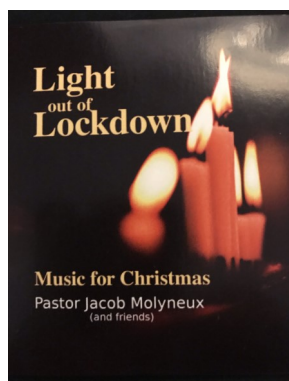


During Advent at this difficult time, folk at Knighton Methodist Chapel wanted to reach out in a tangible way into their community: by decorating our windows so they face outwards, and placing our Christmas trees outside. We wanted to provide a means whereby anyone could come and leave a prayer request on the tree. Everything on the tree is recycled.

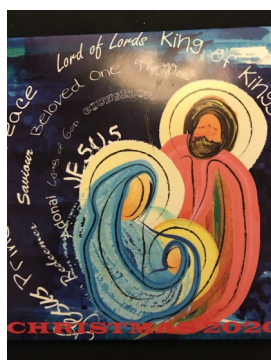
These prayers are offered to God in our weekly church services. We've had some great chats with people walking by and living locally and will probably need a bigger tree next year!! Many thanks to all at the church for getting involved in the ongoing event, including sanitising the individual permanent marker pens and stringing the CDs for bunting.

Deacon Sara Windsor-Hides

METHODIST MISSION THROUGH MUSIC PRODUCE A CHRISTMAS GIFT CD... ...AND A PLAY



Lay pastor Jacob Molyneux has used the incongruity of lockdown to get busy in his shed and produce a Christmas CD. The idea for *Light out of Lockdown* came to Jacob while he was preparing hymns for the Circuit's weekly online service. "I had it as soon as lockdown began," Jacob told the *Green Sock*. "To hear your favourite hymns is a comforting thing, especially while we are not up and running and having our regular services." The hymns were made available to listen to on SoundCloud. "I added the hymns from our online services so people could listen to them there but not everybody is on the internet. So, the Christmas CD is a gift that anybody can have over Christmas, to listen to carols and music that God gives to unite us all, as a body of worshipping people."



Producing the CD entailed many hours of work and Jacob is thankful for his understanding wife Carol and his neighbours who withstood lots of trumpet playing as well as his dog Bella who, because she likes to sing along, had to be separated from them during the recording. "I really am proud of it" Jacob said of the finished product. "There were times in the garage I couldn't open the door because of being tied up with wires. I just worked hour by hour then I'd have a break. I'm hoping that everybody enjoys it."

In addition to the CD, Jacob has recorded *Mak the Sheepstealer* a short play adapted from the Wakefield Mystery Plays which is also available to listen to on SoundCloud. As social distancing meant he could not meet with the other members of the Pilgrim Players who he usually performs with, he recruited his sister Ann Molyneux Andrew and her husband David with whom he shares a bubble. "It's done in the style our mother used to read Rupert Bear to us," he said adding, "we have done these plays before. We've done *The Wesleys*, which was performed at Snailbeach Chapel and we're currently working on another Wakefield play, *Mystery and Miracle*."

Light out of Lockdown is available from the Circuit Office. To listen to Mission Through Music and *Mak the Sheepstealer* on SoundCloud go to <https://soundcloud.com/user-275884405> or <https://www.shropshireandmarches.org.uk/>



Wednesday 16th Dec at 4pm and Saturday 19th Dec at 4pm.

Live-streaming to 'The Big Nativity Zoom' Facebook page.

Give me a call for the Zoom codes! 07852 930478!

Sing some new Christmas songs and carols

Enjoy our Nativity story
Discover why Jesus was born!
Ideal for families

Details : Frances 01568 612406.

Leominster Methodist Church

Advent & Christmas

Shropshire & Marches Methodist Circuit
Online Phone or Livestream

Sundays 10:45 am

Dec 20	7pm	Lessons & Carols
Dec 21	7pm	Blue Christmas
Dec 24	430pm	Crib Service
Dec 24	7pm	Fireside Christmas
Dec 25	10am	Country Christmas

Live on Facebook/ShrewsMethodist

To access by phone or Zoom please ring
01743 791 267 for the codes
Standard rates apply for phone in worship

TINY CHURCH ON CHRISTMAS TOUR

**WE CAN'T BRING YOU BLUE SKIES AND SUNSHINE
BUT WE CAN BRING YOU A REMINDER THERE IS LIGHT ON ITS WAY WITH
CAROLS FROM YOUR MINISTRIAL TEAM AT THE VENUES & DATES BELOW**

This is for you and our communities so it would be great if you could help by posting some of our fliers through the letter boxes of the homes near where we are visiting – we hope people will listen from their windows, their doorsteps or gardens from where they can sing along. We would like people to stay safe, and encourage them not to gather around the vehicle, however in some venues people may need to leave their properties, if they do so please ensure they wear a face covering, keep 2m distance. We are not asking for donations

CHAPEL	VENUE	TIME
THURSDAY 3rd DECEMBER		
Oswestry	Oswestry nr Methodist Church	12.30pm
Chirk Bank	Oakland Road	2.00pm
Chirk	Maes-y-Waun (cul de sac T1-S1)	3.00pm
St Martins	Ellesmere Rd nr. Bungalows	5.30pm
THURSDAY 10th DECEMBER		
Ellesmere	Cambridge Avenue	2.30pm
Wain	Plaines Way	4.00pm
	Trentham Road	4.45pm
	Somerset Way	5.30pm
	Bailey Close	6.15pm
SATURDAY 12th DECEMBER		
Moors	Outside Chapel	2.30pm
THURSDAY 17th DECEMBER		
Bettisfield	Chapel view	1.00pm
Northwood	Near Chapel	2.00pm
West Felton	Springfield Gardens	4.00pm
Maesbrook	Maesbrook Village Hall	5.30pm
Kinnerley	Coly Anchor/Centenary Close	6.30pm
SATURDAY 19th DECEMBER		
Welshampton	Village Hall car park	6pm
THURSDAY 24th DECEMBER CHRISTMAS EVE		
Welsh End & Coton	At Welsh End Chapel	1.00pm
Ellerdine Heath	Community Hall car park	2.30pm

The Methodist Church phone Rev. Julia on 07810360778 for fliers and details

Longest night & Blue Christmas

A TIME FOR THOSE WHO FIND CHRISTMAS DIFFICULT

A TIME OF STORY, SONG AND SYMBOL
FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR HOME
FOR ANYONE FEELING BLUE

DECEMBER 21, 7PM
ZOOM/PHONE/LIVESTREAM
FACEBOOK.COM/SHREWSMETHODISTS

Seeker, Agnostic, and spiritual but not religious friendly

FOR ZOOM OR PHONE CODES
01743 791 267

If you are feeling strong emotions
please ring Samaritans 116 123

Tree of Light

Celebrate this Christmas with a dedication to a loved one, or thank a person or organisation, commemorate an anniversary, a grandchild or send greetings to friends and family by making a dedication and donation to the Ludlow Tree of Light. All profits this year will go to **Hands Together LUDLOW**. For more details pick up a dedication form from St Laurence's church or if you would like one to be posted to you please ring the Hands Together Helpline **01584 817250**, or download a form from the Rotary Club website www.ludlowrotaryclub.org.uk. For on-line donations go to www.goldengiving.com/wall/ludlow-rotary-club



The Ludlow Rotary Tree of Light is located in the Castle Gardens on the Castle Square and the lights will be on from 21st November 2020 till 5th January 2021.

Dedications are not placed on the tree, but all dedications received up to Twelfth Night will be recorded in the Book of Remembrance, as well as online at

www.ludlowrotaryclub.org.uk. A list of dedications received by Thursday 17th December will be published in the Ludlow Advertiser's Christmas edition.



Christmas Worship at Ludlow Methodist Church



Sundays 13th, 20th and 27th December
Morning worship: 10.30

Thursday 24th December
Midnight (in Bethlehem) Communion: 9.30pm

Friday 25th December
Christmas Celebration: 10.30

FACEMASKS must be worn (unless exempt).

We're sorry that congregational SINGING is not permitted in church.

These services are also available live on Zoom. Call 01584 318628 for details.

Also Live on Facebook/~~ShrewsMethodist~~

20th December
Lessons and Carols online: 7pm

24th December
Crib Service: 4.30pm



LEOMINSTER CLUSTER

CAROLS FOR CHRISTMAS ZOOM
24TH DECEMBER
AT 4.00PM

OUR LIVE SERVICES FOR
CHRISTMAS ARE:

LUSTON 5.00PM 22 DECEMBER

WYSON 3.00PM 24 DECEMBER

LEOMINSTER 10.00AM 25
DECEMBER

WEOBLEY 10.30AM 25 DECEMBER
(LIVE AND ZOOM)

FOR MORE INFORMATION EMAIL
francesbiseker@rocketmail.com



**Christmas EVE
CRIB SERVICE**

ONLINE OR ZOOM

DECEMBER
24
4:30 pm

STREAMING LIVE ON
FACEBOOK/SHREWSMETHODISTS

FOR ZOOM MEETING ROOM CODES
RING 01743 791 267
HOSTED BY SHROPSHIRE AND MARCHES CIRCUIT

**THERE WILL BE
CHRISTMAS CAROLS
AT
HOPTON BANK CHAPEL
ON DECEMBER 20TH
AT 2:30PM**

AND

**MELVILLE CHAPEL
ON DECEMBER 20TH
AT 6PM**

**A NATIVITY TRAIL
WILL TAKE PLACE OVER FOUR DAYS FROM
19TH - 23RD DECEMBER AROUND
CLEOBURY MORTIMER ENDING AT THE
HUB WHERE PARTICIPANTS WILL RECEIVE
A GOODY BAG!**



Shropshire and Marches Methodist Circuit

*Celebrating
THE BIRTH OF
Christ*

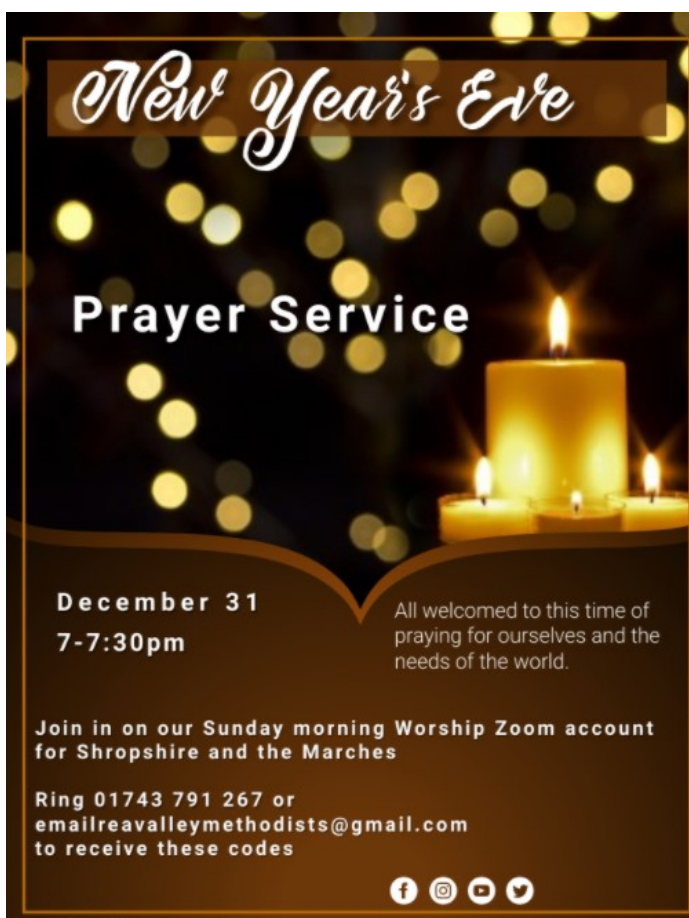
CRIB
SERVICE
AT 4:30PM

**24
DEC**

FIRESIDE
CHRISTMAS
AT 7:00PM

Live on Facebook/Shrewsmethodists
or by Phone or Zoom

01743 791 267 for codes



New Year's Eve

Prayer Service

December 31
7-7:30pm

All welcomed to this time of
praying for ourselves and the
needs of the world.

Join in on our Sunday morning Worship Zoom account
for Shropshire and the Marches

Ring 01743 791 267 or
emailreavalleymethodists@gmail.com
to receive these codes

f i y t

For more information on church services and events over Christmas, please consult the Plan or contact churches directly.

Contact us at: media.smcircuit@gmail.com 01588 630 769 or visit our website at shropshireandmarches.org.uk