

CIRCUIT NEWS

LINCOLN METHODIST SUMMER 2020

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A huge thank you to all those who took part in the Thy Kingdom Come global prayer movement that invites Christians around the world to pray from Ascension to Pentecost for more people to come to know Jesus. (Thursday 21st to Sunday 31st May)



Superintendent's Letter, Summer 2020

As I write this, Instilled on our minds are the words, '*Stay at home, protect the NHS, Save lives.*' Even with the restraints of this I see many good things happening around me. Communities are working together looking after each other and making sure friends and neighbours are safe and cared for. It has been amazing how people have connected in many ways. I want to say thank you to all of those who have enabled this, both from within the church and from those beyond the church.

As for us in the Methodist church it seems strange not meeting on a regular basis for worship in church. I am glad we have been able to provide a regular worship on a Sunday at 10.30am and Music on a Wednesday at 7pm. My thanks go out to all those involved but especially to Mark Thompson without whose help none of this would have happened. It has been great to see an increasing number of people watching the services. We are planning to continue these services and will develop them as we move forward.

I am also grateful to my colleagues for the effort they are putting in to make sure everyone remains connected either by the weekly circuit email or information sent out by the circuit office by post. (If you have been missed out then please let us know.)

I believe it will be quite a while until we will be functioning to full capacity and we continue to listen to the latest guidance. I am sure that there will be a slow relaxation of the rules which might enable us to have some limited activity in church. We will work out what that means and how we might provide access to church buildings.

Not only do we have a new way of living our lives I have been continuing to reflect upon the scriptures. Today I was reading the opening words of 1 John 1:1-4 which says this:

1 John 1:1-4 (MSG)

1 ¹⁻² From the very first day, we were there, taking it all in—we heard it with our own ears, saw it with our own eyes, verified it with our own hands. The Word of

Life appeared right before our eyes; we saw it happen! And now we're telling you in most sober prose that what we witnessed was, incredibly, this: The infinite Life of God himself took shape before us.

³⁻⁴We saw it, we heard it, and now we're telling you so you can experience it along with us, this experience of communion with the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ. Our motive for writing is simply this: We want you to enjoy this, too. Your joy will double our joy!

The Message (MSG) Copyright © 1993, 2002, 2018 by Eugene H. Peterson

It is believed that John writes this to Christians in various places in the later part of the 1st century AD. At a time when the message was being challenged by an early form of Gnostic teaching, he felt the need to address this. He wrote firstly to expose false teaching, and secondly, to give believers assurance of salvation. The first four verses serve as an introduction and speaks about the reality of the incarnation. Which is spoken about in the opening verses of John's gospel.

It gives a first-hand testimony to what John had heard, seen, looked at and touched. His desire was to share fellowship with others so that they too may have their own experience. He had a real desire for them to experience and share his joy in knowing Jesus. For them to have communion with the Father and the Son.

During the Coronavirus, during deep sadness we too can know Joy. We can know the depth of God's love and draw strength from the faith we have through Jesus Christ. We can trust him to carry us through. Amid despair, anxiousness and fear we live with the knowledge that God is with us.

May God continue to be with you and give you strength to face each day, trusting in his love of you. There will be a day when we will be together and when we will be able to remember and see how God has brought us through.

Many Blessings

Alan



Statement from the Presidents of Churches Together in All Lincolnshire

As the senior leaders of Christian churches across Lincolnshire, we want to put on record our respect and appreciation for the responses throughout the area to the present crisis; we consider such a diversity of efforts to be wholly inspiring. Local groups, charities, churches and faith communities have come together, almost as never before, to meet the needs that have arisen as a consequence of the necessary measures put in place to reduce the impact upon the NHS and save lives. The resilience of the city, towns and villages, together with their compassion for one another within them, has been heartening. The commitment and sacrifices of people in many varying occupations, especially the medical and caring professions, but so many others too, has been deeply impressive. We are proud to belong to a county that has achieved much thus far. We have an unshakable hope that, together, we will continue to face whatever lies ahead with fortitude and faithfulness.

The emergency is an enormous trial for us all. The lockdown itself has been hard in numerous ways, there have been physical and mental health challenges for large numbers of people, some relationships have been strained and there is anxiety about the financial impact upon homes and businesses, large and small. Concerns about the education of our children and young people are understandable. There is also the growing realisation that getting through this will take much longer than we had first imagined.

Nevertheless, we believe that in the future ours will be a different but stronger society, valuing human contact, interaction, kindness and human compassion again. We will take with us into the future that which we have learned, not least that every single life matters and is above economic concerns.

Our faith teaches us to hold fast even in the midst of an epic struggle, and that in this Easter season doubt, darkness and death are overcome by hope, light and life.

We will continue to pray for all who are suffering as a consequence of this crisis, for all frontline workers, for those who provide for us and for the leaders of Government, both local and national.

Rev Nick Ashton, Regional Minister

East Midland Baptist Association

Dr. Pete Atkins

Ground Level Network of Churches

Rev. Geoffrey S. Clarke, Moderator

East Midlands Synod of the United Reformed Church

Rt. Rev. Dr. David Court. Acting Bishop of Lincoln

Church of England, Diocese of Lincoln

Rt. Rev. Patrick McKinney, Roman Catholic Bishop of Nottingham

Roman Catholic Church, Diocese of Nottingham

Major Brian Slinn, Divisional Commander,

Salvation Army East Midlands

Rev Bruce Thompson, Chair,

Lincolnshire Methodist District

Mrs Anne Wood

Lincolnshire Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)



Night Light Crisis Cafes.

Providing a place to those experiencing Mental Health Crisis.

I am really excited to be able to share that Bailgate Methodist Church has joined with the Greater Lincoln Active Faith Network in a new partnership with the NHS to provide a Crisis Café for those experiencing a mental health crisis. Mental Health has, for too long, been the elephant in the room with those who suffer, afraid to tell anyone in fear of being labelled a weaker person in some way, and those who are fortunate enough not to suffer not knowing what to say or do to help someone with their struggles.

The vision of the **Night Light** Cafes is to provide a non-clinical out of hours safe space, run predominantly by trained volunteers. In these places of safety, guests will receive a warm welcome and acceptance in a peaceful environment. They will be offered activities and support to help de-escalate their crisis.

Night Light Cafes will be open seven days of the week in seven different churches around Lincoln, with Bailgate hosting the café on a Wednesday evening between 10pm and 2am. Referrals will be made directly by professionals or via Crisis Line. Suicide rates in Lincolnshire are above the national average, and these statistics show a real need for help to be given when people are experiencing mental health crisis. This project will have a great impact on our city.

Since The Well opened in 2016 I have thought it would make a perfect “safe space” for those with mental health issues but I have not known how to develop this idea. I was thrilled when I heard that GLAFN were looking into the possibility of starting this venture. I personally have suffered with mental health issues for many years and have spent time in the Peter Hodgkinson Centre some years ago when I felt my life was not worth living. I praise God that during this dark time I had my Church family supporting me in prayer so I made it through. This experience amongst many others I have suffered has made me passionate about helping those with mental health issues, to know that they are loved by an amazing God, who is not interested in what the world thinks but sees His creation and says “it is good”.

I pray that Bailgate Church will become a light in the darkness for those who are in need of a loving heavenly father, that lives will be saved and that the name of Jesus will be lifted high and glorified in the city of Lincoln.

I now have a team of 11 volunteers from within Bailgate Church congregation and from outside of the church and, although we are in Lockdown, three of us are available each Wednesday via 1:1 telephone calls or in Zoom Café chats. Covid 19 has affected us all in some way and has had a deep impact on those with mental health issues so it is great to be able to reach out to them at this time. As soon as we are able, we look forward to opening the doors of our church to hold face-to-face cafes instead of virtual ones.

If anyone from the circuit has a particular interest in reaching out to help the mentally ill and could give some time on a regular basis to join the rota of volunteers, we would love to hear from you. Full training is given and there is a robust support network so we never feel alone.

Proverbs 31:8 says "*Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute*". May God equip us and enable us to do just that as we reach out to the vulnerable at their time of crisis.

Ruth Burrows





Central Methodist News

Being unable to meet together in our churches to give praise and thanks to God, there are so many ways in which we can show His love and care for each of us through the fellowship we share with each other by constantly being in touch by the power of technology in its many forms.

Learning about the pleasures we are getting through new hobbies, and of the skills we only dreamt of. Our flair for the new rainbow designs in support of the wonderful NHS. Drawing of the union flag in readiness for the celebration of VE Day. Patience to tackle a problem until it's completed.

Becoming more aware of and appreciating God's wonderful creation in our gardens. Hearing in the silence the song of the birds and their differing trills. The many days of glorious sunshine, the beauty of the clouds in the stillness of the sky.

Rev Margaret's continual contact: the words and prayers she offers to bring us comfort.

Our weekly newsletter is being circulated and prepared by Gary who challenges us in many ways – Conundrums, Quiz of the Week, Word Search, and news of special celebrations, together with Rev Margaret's message to us all.

We thank Carolyne and Val and are so grateful to them as they work tirelessly for the Foodbank during this difficult time which sadly becomes more needed each week.

Rev Margaret has registered us to be a collection point for the Shoe Box Appeal. We can again help those in need without gifts. Joyce Lewis has for many years co-ordinated this most valuable of services. We thank her and her husband Colin for their wonderful work in serving others throughout the world.

We have much for which to be grateful. Let our hearts overflow with thankfulness and remember the story of Pollyanna, an 11-year-old orphan whose philosophy of life centres on what she called "The Glad Game" which gave her an optimistic and positive attitude which she learned from her father. The game consisted of finding something everyday to be glad about in every situation.

On our return to our beloved churches Rev Margaret would like us to consider Pollyanna's robust optimism and each share the many, many things that we, during lockdown, have so much to be glad about.

The summer months are ahead. Let us rejoice in whatever is before us and be grateful to the Lord for His ever-caring love and understanding of our needs.

God Bless you all.

Hello,

I would personally like to thank the office, Ministers and all who have kept the church **ALIVE** over these past weeks - including Chris Marsh. I know **North Hykeham** church folk are appreciative, We have enjoyed Burton Road services etc. We often put hymn requests on Dawn Chorus with Rod Whiting on Sunday's 6-7am. I wonder if many people hear this programme? Like everyone we look forward to worshipping together again and giving our thanks and praise to God for his continuing love.



Barbara

LINCOLN CIRCUIT

Praying Together - June to August 2020

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 Pray for the whole of humanity throughout the world as we come together to defeat the evils we encounter | 9 Pray for our Emergency Services who work tirelessly for our welfare |
| 2 Pray for worldwide leadership, as they work towards peace and harmony | 10 Pray that we will recognise the signs and wonders of God around us |
| 3 Pray for the many religions of the world, who each seek peace through their own traditions | 11 Pray for the farmers in the area as they face challenging conditions and pressures within their work environment |
| 4 Pray that God will break through the chains that hold us back from spreading the gospel message | 12 Pray for those who are involved in creative activities that they may show God's love through their work |
| 5 Pray for our Ministers as they go about their pastoral business | 13 Pray for those who risk their own lives to save others |
| 6 Pray for everyone in our Lincoln Circuit that they may come close to God | 14 Pray for the Methodist Forces Board as they deliver reliable and compassionate Christian pastoral care to all, regardless of religion or belief. |
| 7 Pray for all members who can no longer attend church because of age/poor health. Give them strength, courage and hope | 15 Pray for all who work in the NHS and other Care providers. Give them strength and faith to continue their valuable work |
| 8 Pray for those who work to bring hope and restoration to the lives of the most vulnerable people in the community | 16 Pray for the myriad workers who keep our country running eg delivery drivers, shop workers, postal staff, etc |

LINCOLN CIRCUIT

Praying Together - June to August 2020

| | |
|--|--|
| 17 Pray for volunteers, without whom society would grind to a halt | 25 Commend our world, our church, our community to our God, knowing that he is at work in them and through them |
| 18 Pray for the homeless and charities that support them so that homelessness will be eradicated in Lincoln | 26 Pray for all who are suffering. Give thanks for our salvation and pray for the redeeming of all creation |
| 19 Pray for those suffering from Mental health issues. Grant them comfort and reassurance | 27 Give thanks for the saints of God and rejoice that we have a share in communion with them |
| 20 Pray that we have serenity to accept the things we cannot change; courage to change the things we can; and wisdom to know the difference. | 28 Be O Lord, a guiding star above me, a smooth path below me, a kindly shepherd behind me and a bright flame before me; today, tonight and forever. Amen. |
| 21 Rejoice that our Lord conquered death and that life is eternal | 29 Christ is the Morning Star who, when the darkness of this world is past, brings to his saints the promise of the light of life and opens everlasting day. Amen |
| 22 Celebrate that God made and loves the world. Pray that we act responsibly towards God's creation | 30 Be with us, Lord God, creator of all, to strengthen us on our journey, to guide us in all our doings, that we may share in the love and care for your world. Amen |
| 23 Give thanks that the Lord Jesus Christ came to dwell among us. Let us continue to meet Him in others | 31 May we see Christ in others, be Christ to others, that we may dwell in Him, and He in us. Amen |
| 24 Rejoice in the power of the Holy Spirit. Give thanks for the life and abilities he gives to us |  |



Farewell

As I write this, restrictions are being eased but in the words of the Three Degrees “When will I see you again?”

I’m not sure I will physically see you before I’m off to pastures new in August/September, so as Douglas Adams wrote “So Long and Thanks for all the Fish”!

Perhaps more apt is the song the Von Trapp Family Singers sing at the end of the Sound of Music – “So Long, Farewell.....”

May you indeed fare well in all you do and say, as you continue to discover more of who God is calling you to be.

Six years ago a nervous Durham student set out for the wilds of Lincolnshire and wondered what she’d find.

Home.

For that is what it became very quickly as people helped me move in, unpack and put up beds!

What an adventure since through probation and ordination.

At times its been a rocky road but as we’ve journeyed through all life has thrown at us, “in every high and every low”, the Lord has never let go of us (Matt Redman).

I would not be the minister I now am, the minister Kendal circuit want to be their Superintendent minister, if not for the love, care and support you've shown me, for the challenges you've helped me overcome, for the challenges you've made of me to be the person I was called to be.

Thank you!

This unprecedented time (to use the word of the moment) has challenged us to rethink how we are Church, in the Greek *Ecclesia*, an assembly, a gathering of the people of God when we haven't been able to physically gather.

It's led to some creative thinking.

Who knew we'd learn a whole new set of skills and the language of Zoom, through which some have been able to share afternoon tea.

Thank you to Cherry Willingham folk and especially Janet who delivered cakes to people's doorsteps (the Birthday cake was delicious!).

Who knew we'd learn how to sing together, sort of, though it was much better on mute!

Thank you to Washingborough and especially Fred and Marion for leading us on Sunday evenings.

Who knew we'd be so blessed by people sharing their God given talents.

Thank you to Clare and Keith for sharing your love of photography each day and thus keeping us aware of time passing. Day 55 already! (at time of writing).

The images have provoked wonder at our amazing world and your reflections have brought them to life, making us laugh, cry and think in equal measure.

Thank you to Sheila whose poems have added another dimension to these daily rays of hope for so many.

Thank you to Margaret and Richard for providing material for Reepham discoverers to reflect on and seek to ground themselves in a world of confusion and uncertainty and to Alec for sharing his love of poetry

Thank you to all the sewers and knitters out there who've turned pillow cases into wash bags for nurse uniforms and brought some comfort as relatives treasure a knitted heart which matches the one by the side of their loved one in hospital or care home.



It's been a joy and a privilege to collect them and deliver to friends at St Johns Washingborough to pass on.

Thank you to Jason and staff at Washingborough Academy for continuing to provide whole life education for the children of key workers and weekly hot dinners to the vulnerable elderly.

Its been wonderful to see the community pulling together, and God's people adapting to serve the present age, just as Charles Wesley commended us to do (Sing Faith 658).

Rev Melanie

I'll Lead you all, wherever you may be

Before lockdown hit, I had the joy of sharing the story of Holy Week with Year 5 and 6 pupils at Washingborough Academy.

It felt like giving an entire term's RE lesson in 45 minutes flat, but oh what a privilege to tell the story of the Last Supper; how Jesus' friends were stunned into silence by his words, much like the pupils, who also sat in silence.

That wasn't the case earlier, as they'd noisily marched round, waving palm crosses, to *Make Way, Make Way*, before thinking how easily love can become hate



Love
Cove
Cave
Have
Hate



It was moving to share the meaning behind some of the Lenten symbols – the crown of thorns seemed to fascinate some.

After using an egg as a symbol of resurrection (it seems dead but new life is ready to burst forth) we ended our session with the Messy Grace, though we weren't actually able to hold hands:

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (*hold out hands as if expecting a present*)

And the love of God (*put your hands on your heart*)

And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (*hold hands*)

Be with us all now and for ever. Amen (*raise hands together on the word Amen*)

In between telling the story we also sang verses from *Lord of the Dance*, which some teachers remembered from their childhood!

Written in 1963 by Sydney Carter, the hymn tells the Gospel story through the eyes of Jesus.

I haven't been able to get it out of my head since, especially the refrain of 'I'll lead you all wherever you may be;' a promise of Christ's presence with each of us, in the silence or noise of our homes, a promise that in these times apart, keeps us together, bound by a chord that cannot be broken.

Rev Melanie

Easter Crosses

Ever since I experienced it in my home church many years ago decorating the cross with flowers on Easter Day has become a big part of Easter for me.

The transformation of a stark cross into a riot of colour is a wonderful symbol of God's power to give life in place of death, hope in place of despair.

This year of course we weren't able to do this in our chapels so some of us made our own Easter Crosses to hang in our windows as symbols of Christ's presence within our communities.

Hopefully we can share the many and varied designs when we celebrate being able to gather together again.

For now I share the Easter Cross that stood in the manse garden

Its made from parts of a wooden fence panel, a bit of garden bench, the communion cloth from BBH



Q – Quiet your soul
U – Unite as one with God
A – Act with Godly love
R – Read your Bible
A – Activate your faith
N – Nourish your soul
T – Talk with God
I – Intercede for others
N – Nestle in the presence of God
E – Elevate God in Worship

Quarantine

St.Giles

Like all other churches we have had to close the church for worship, but we are far from closed. Every morning, thanks to John Lawson, we get together via Zoom to have 15 to 30 minutes of fellowship and prayer with usually between 6 and 12 of us online. For those not on Zoom we are in regular contact by phone or email. Each Wednesday we have Bible Study, again via Zoom.

The weekly streaming of services is proving very popular, thanks to Mark Thompson at Burton Road, with paper copies of the services being distributed to those without a computer.

John, accompanied by Debbie and Kerry, man the Community Larder on Wednesdays and Fridays with a good number of people needing their services. The shelves are well stocked thanks to the generosity of local supermarkets and wholesalers.

Even though the building is closed a maintenance schedule still has to be kept with the taps run and the loos flushed daily as well as the bins put out and the fire alarm tested as well as the grass being cut. A comprehensive checklist supplied by the circuit is being followed.

One of the CCTV cameras has been moved to overlook the front of the building.

Time will tell as to when normal services will resume but we are confident that, when the day comes, we will be ready.

IN PARTNERSHIP

“The vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter’s hand, and he reworked it into another vessel as seemed good to him”
Jeremiah 18 verse 4

God was showing Jeremiah “work in progress”.
As they watched the potter, the item he was making obviously dissatisfied him.

Unphased, he re-moulded the clay,
not wasting it, but creating something else.

“This,” said God to Jeremiah, “is what I can do with you.”

It was as if I was witnessing a lesson from God,
and eavesdropping on a conversation,
which of course I was.....

At this point I was struck by something wonderful.
God was also speaking to me,
The lesson and the words were for me,
and not only for me, but for everyone.

“This,” God said, “is what I can do for and with you.
We can work together.
I can help you to become what you should be.”

I was overwhelmed by the possibilities presented to me.
I can be what God intends me to be,
if I will allow myself to be moulded by him.

Just as God taught Jeremiah and used him,
so God wants me to work with him,
in fact,
to be in partnership with him.

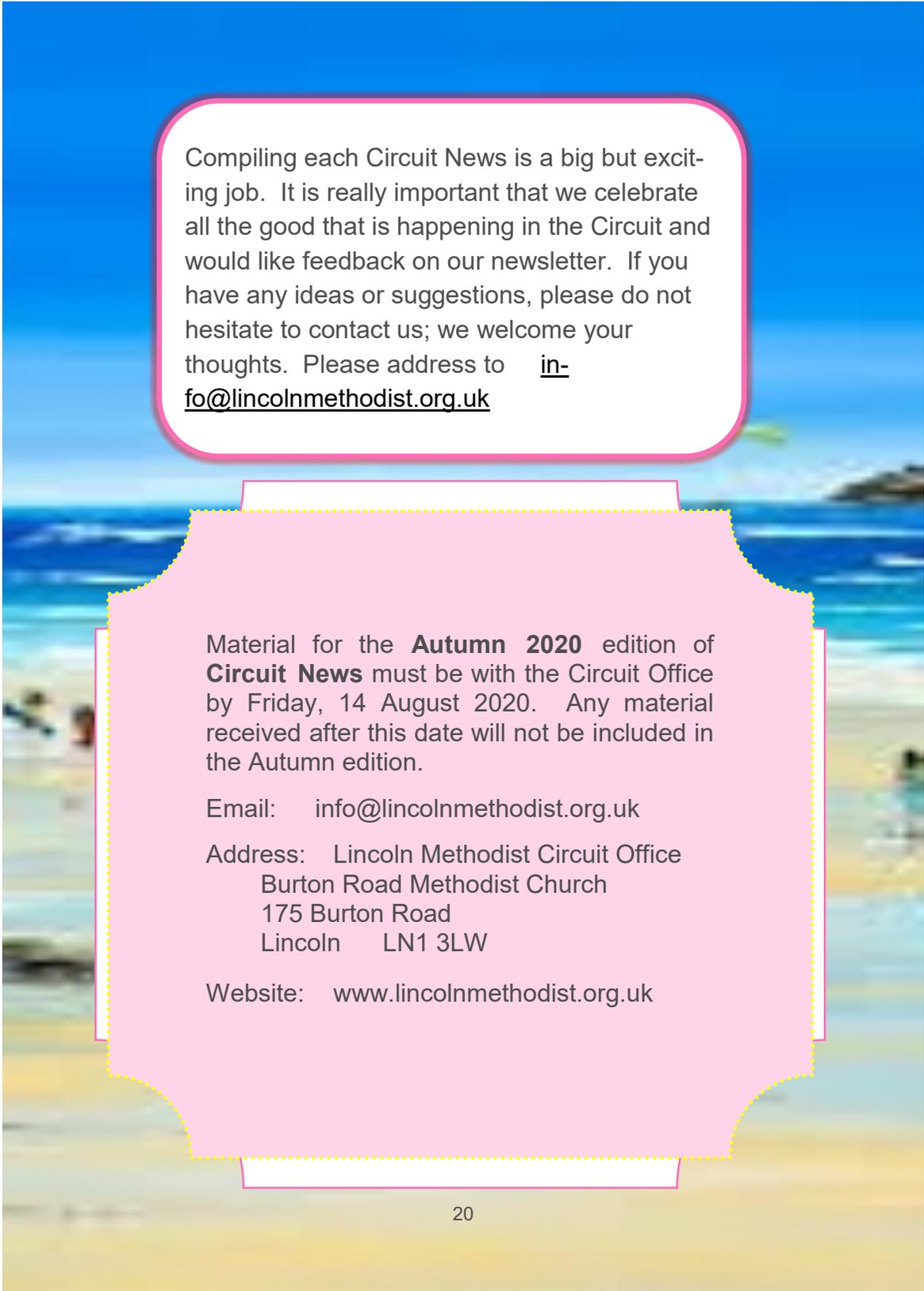
And this invitation,
to become a partner in God’s firm,
is for everyone,
and has been,
since the beginning of creation.

Margaret Doughty



Interesting Dates During the Summer Months

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| June 1 st | Visitation of the Blessed Virgin |
| June 2 nd | Coronation Day |
| June 7 th | Trinity Sunday |
| June 9 th | St Columba |
| June 11 th | St Barnabas, Apostle/Corpus Christi |
| June 13 th | Queen's Official Birthday |
| June 15 th | Parliament passes Family Allowance Act (15 June 1945) |
| June 20 th | Summer Solstice |
| June 21 st | Father's Day |
| June 24 th | Nativity of St John the Baptist |
| June 26 th | Signing of UN charter (26 June 1945) |
| June 27 th | Armed Forces' Day |
| June 29 th | St Peter and St Paul, Apostles |
| July 15 th | St Swithin's Day |
| July 22 nd | Mary Magdalene |
| July 25 th | St James, Apostle |
| July 26 th | Brunel's <i>SS Great Britain</i> crosses Atlantic in 14 days (sails 26 July 1845) |
| August 6 th | The Transfiguration |
| August 15 th | St Mary, the Virgin |
| August 17 th | Publication of George Orwell's <i>Animal Farm</i> (17 August 1945) |
| August 24 th | St Bartholomew, Apostle |
| September 1 st | St Giles |
| September 6 th | <i>The Mayflower</i> leaves Plymouth for America, carrying pilgrim settlers (6 th September 1620) |
| September 14 th | Holy Cross Day |
| September 21 st | St Matthew, Evangelist/International Day of Peace |
| September 22 nd | Autumnal Equinox |
| September 29 th | St Michael and All Angels |



Compiling each Circuit News is a big but exciting job. It is really important that we celebrate all the good that is happening in the Circuit and would like feedback on our newsletter. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact us; we welcome your thoughts. Please address to info@lincolnmethodist.org.uk

Material for the **Autumn 2020** edition of **Circuit News** must be with the Circuit Office by Friday, 14 August 2020. Any material received after this date will not be included in the Autumn edition.

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