

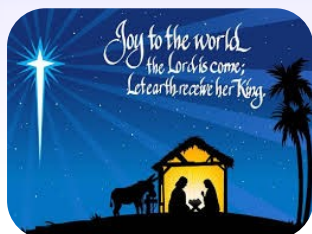
# Circuit News

Lincoln Methodist 17/02  
Winter 2021-2022



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Lord: In the midst of Winter, when the days are cold and wind can pierce, remind us of the warmth of your love.

In the midst of Winter, when days are short, dawn comes late, and dusk arrives early, remind us that in the darkness your light still shines.

Remind us that Easter is but a short time away.

And when in our lives we feel as if we are experiencing a season of winter, reach out to us with the power of your resurrection so that we may feel the warmth of your love and see your light that alone can take away the darkness of our soul. **Amen**

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@lincolnmethdist.org.uk](mailto:info@lincolnmethdist.org.uk)

Material for the **Spring 2022** edition of **Circuit News** must be with the Circuit Office by Wednesday, **9 February 2022**. Any material received after this date will not be included in the March edition.

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December 2021

Dear Friends,

Some while ago I came across a Church sign that said:

***Come as you are, you can change inside...***

Since we've come out of lockdown and all its accompanying restrictions, life within the Lincoln Methodist Circuit and within our individual Churches reveals we are living through a season of great change. Indeed, change is all around us - and the very reason I'm writing this opening letter of 'Circuit News' is because Rev Alan Swann is currently on his sabbatical but will return to us later this month ... when some degree of 'normal service' will be resumed.

One feature of life that we can guarantee is that change is a frequent companion - but it now also includes the fallout from the pandemic. Sometimes we may choose change, we may even welcome and embrace it. At other times change is thrust upon us coming seemingly out of nowhere - and we may struggle even to find the strength just to hang-on and muddle our way through.

And yet, as we continue to step into Advent and Christmas 2021 with all the uncertainties we face - we are once again called to put our trust in the One whose deep love for humankind and for His creation is constant and unwavering (1 John 4 vv9-12).

This winter we wait patiently and expectantly to celebrate the coming of the Christ-child, the Prince of Peace, born to a homeless family whose parents were sleeping rough. I'm reminded of the significance of this amazing truth by a verse from 'Beneath the paper wrappings' by Claire Stainsby (Singing the Faith 192):

Beneath the paper wrappings, there's an open stable door,  
beneath the fir tree trappings, there's a welcome and there's more.

Beyond the tinsel fairy is a presence that's divine,  
There's a child to change the future, turning water into wine.

*Look inside, look above, look beyond and see the love,*

*look inside and you will see.*

*Look inside, look below, look beyond, and you will know*

*the one who came to give his life for you and me.*

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In such times of change there are of course many challenges, but amazing opportunities too as we go forward together into all that 2022 holds for us. So, I'd like to close with the breakthrough prayer:

God of love, God for all,

Your purposes are more beautiful than we can possibly imagine.

Fill us with your Holy Spirit.

Help us to let go of all that holds us back.

Open our lives to new seasons of humility and faith, of change and growth.

Shake us up with the Good News of Jesus and show us the way.

**Amen.**

Every blessing this Christmas,

David

Rev David Lawton



# News from our Churches



## Central

Central has been going through a period of upheaval. Firstly we were successful in acquiring a grant from English Heritage and eventually, after many delays, scaffolders arrived and work started on refurbishing a lot of the “high-up” jobs, roof, gutters down pipes, window frames to name but a few. It has been a slow process but is almost complete.

In addition to this we had been approached by the ACTS Trust to allow part of our building to be used by the Community Grocery, which is a step up from Foodbank as there is a cost, albeit modest, for what is received. Foodbank has been a real help to those who need it and will continue; however the Community Grocery, which is to be staffed by people recruited by the ACTS Trust, will be another but different way of helping those on low incomes.

Half of our lower hall has been set up for the Community Grocery with shelving, tills etc and there was a launch event on October 5<sup>th</sup>.

Central folk are also embarking on a project and have set up, in the other half of the lower hall, their own “shop”, and we have a selection of good clothing, bric-a-brac, toys etc.

The intention is that people coming to the grocery will also pop in for a tea or coffee and peruse the goods which we have on offer. In this way we are trying to build up a real relationship with people in the community.

Philip Moore, our resident gardener, has been busy working on our Courtyard Garden, which is the space at the back of Central. Chairs and tables will be placed there so that on good days people can enjoy their refreshments in the open. It is looking very nice with plants that Philip has grown and will be a real asset to us.

There are also other things to look forward to as, if the situation permits, we intend to have our Christmas Tree Festival when we involve the groups in the Sincil Bank area, plus we are again acting as the area collection point for the Link to Hope shoe box appeal. (ring 01522 697177 if you are interested; website <https://linktohope.co.uk/shoebbox-appeal-2021/> ).



The work for the Kingdom goes on in spite of the many problems some of our members have faced in recent months and are still coping with. We have a wonderful caring family at Central, and ask you to pray God’s continued blessing upon all our precious members and friends and their families.

**St Columba’s** invite you to join them for Tea and Cakes (or coffee, if you prefer) on Tuesday afternoons, 2pm—4pm. £1.50 for a cuppa and a piece of cake.

Enjoy a chat with new and old friends in friendly surroundings.

Look forward to seeing you there.



**Next Community Lunch—**  
12:30pm Saturday 15th January 2022  
Tel: 01522 851170 to book your place





## North Hykeham

We are all pleased to be having our regular services again and our numbers increase gradually. Rev Alan re-arranged our church layout which has proved a huge success.



We held our Harvest Service on Sunday, 10<sup>th</sup> October - appreciated by all.

On a recent Sunday, as we left church, someone remarked that the tall trees and the background of

the Village green our church was in made a beautiful setting and looked lovely and inviting. Whilst there was agreement someone remarked that indeed it did look good, but it was the inside beauty that pleased God and that we should always remember that whether it be a beautiful person, or building, it was the unbounded inside love and beauty that counted most. Let us then overflow the inside of our churches with God's love.



Barbara



## Swallowbeck

We are very pleased that our premises are now being used again by so many community and other groups including Brownies, Guides, a small orchestra, Pilates and a baby sensory group. One way we are trying to build links with these groups is to ask them to choose a carol to include in our Carol Service. Our monthly Lunch Club re-started in October with some new helpers as two of our team after some 30 years have reluc-

tantly decided that age is finally catching up with them. We are looking forward to our traditional Christmas lunch with entertainment. This year during Advent we are using Rev Gordon Webster's series of green themed services, concluding with a carol service on 19 December. We will also be taking part in a pop-up Nativity with hot chocolate and mince pies at Fen Lane Park, North Hykeham from 2-6.00p.m. on Saturday, 11 December as part of the Christmas Fayre.

## Reepham

By the time you read this we hope to be back in our church after the refurbishment. The floor has been levelled, the worship area turned round with a kitchenette at the back and an additional toilet installed as well as new heating, lighting and AV equipment.

This means we will be able to host activities in the church whilst the Pre-School meet in the school-room. They use our premises four days a week and we have been able to allow them to continue to function both during Covid lock-downs and whilst the building work has been going on (the main part of the work being done during the school summer holidays).



We look forward to being able to resume our outreach activities. We kept in touch with the members of our community who attended Fun Friday and Holiday at Home, with gift bags at Christmas and Easter and a series of "tea parties" in church members' homes over the summer. These have been greatly appreciated and all are looking forward to meeting up again. We hope to resume both activities before Christmas.

The availability of the premises during the week means that we will be able to offer a space in the village for other groups. Before we embarked on the project we did a survey of the village and there was a good response from people or groups with ideas of how they might use our building. We look forward to welcoming them.

The project has been very much an act of faith. Some of our members had initially been doubtful about spending the rather large sum of money that the project has entailed. But a number of obstacles have been overcome and people have been very generous (although we are still fund-raising). Rather than being disheartened, the deaths of two key people in the life of the church (Mike Mason and Dorothy Jackson) have inspired us to continue their legacy of service and we feel that God has been present and guiding us in the decisions we have made.

Whilst the work has been going on we have been very grateful to the Anglican Church for allowing us to hold our services in their building when they did not have a service and to share in worship with them at other times. It has brought us closer to them and we hope to continue to work more closely together.

We look forward to finding out what God has in store for us and our church in the coming years as we work with our new minister, Rev. Jennifer Matthews.

Margaret Roe

## Monks Road

We had a wonderful Halloween Party on Saturday, 30<sup>th</sup> October. Over 80 people came into church. Parents and children dressed in fancy dress – pumpkins, witches, skeletons, batman, superman and wonder woman made a fantastic show. The craft tables were busy, selfies were taken with our giant pumpkin, and everyone enjoyed drinks and snacks available for all. As part of our mission in our area this is the fourth time we have held Halloween events – a huge thank you to Rachel and Thea for organising these welcoming occasions. Many of our neighbours are from Eastern Europe and we have enjoyed getting to know them better as each event happens. Messy Church is beginning again – one a month – but under a different name – Family Fun Afternoon, so we are looking forward to sharing with our neighbours again on many occasions. As a church we have prayed for a long time that we would be led in ways to welcome others onto our premises and God is answering our prayers as we make friends with those around.



It has been a real joy also to welcome three or four new faces in to our church family since we fully re-opened in June.

We are pleased to say that since the pandemic our Women's' Circle meeting has begun again. We are aware that at

some churches the women's meeting has had to close and so because of this we would love to welcome other churches to share with us once a month to listen to a speaker and share fellowship.

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> February at 2pm and women from the circuit will be most welcome. Our speaker that afternoon will be Rosemary Smith.

The men at Monks Road also have a monthly meeting and would welcome anyone from around the circuit to join them. The speaker for that meeting has not been confirmed but please come and join on Thursday, 24<sup>th</sup> February at 7pm, you will be most welcome.





## Skellingthorpe -

### November 2021

At Skellingthorpe we are slowly getting back into some sort of routine although not the same one as pre-COVID! We've been told, and indeed realised ourselves, that some things would have to be different, but we've been encouraged to find that the things that worked up to March 2020 are just as good now they have re-started.

In August we held an afternoon tea with tables outside as well as inside as an introduction to our monthly coffee mornings, due to start in September. This wasn't as well attended as we'd hoped but people were much less nervous by October when the second coffee morning was held, just like old times in fact! Until the end of the year the proceeds from all the coffee mornings will be for church funds but in the new year, we plan to involve the groups who have begun hiring the premises again and start to raise funds for charity.

The Craft and Craft 4 Charity groups have both been well attended so far and we're managing to keep members socially distanced by keeping an eye on membership. Everyone is getting used to cleaning both before and after the sessions, as are the groups hiring the premises, its amazing how much spray cleaner and blue paper towel is disappearing!

We have not returned to weekly Sunday services at the moment but have experimented with the timing of some of our services by holding (roughly) every other one at 4.00pm. During the summer months numbers were very low but the Harvest Festival was well attended as was the next afternoon service, so this is something to ponder on. Clearly few people will want to turn out when it is starting to get dark, but the mid-day soup lunch and bible study led by Rev David in 2019 was popular so maybe that's something to be repeated next year.

We're currently preparing for a 'pruned' Festive Season this year. Reluctantly we have decided that there will be no Coffee and Carols by Candlelight evening this year; hosted by the Craft Group this event is normally so popular there is no room to move between tables so social distancing would be impossible! No Christmas Tree/ Angel/ Star Festival either. However, we're planning a Christingle service in chapel on the first Sunday in Advent, our last 4.00pm service this quarter.

The Carol Service is on 19 December at 3.00pm and coffee/tea and mince pies will be served after the service so that's something which hasn't changed and which we think we can safely manage. One thing is certain though, whatever changes we've had to make this year we've been very conscious that God has been, and will be, with us throughout.

God bless you all this Christmas

## St Giles

Rev Gyula Fiak is now in place, disappointingly for only one year. Now that we are out of lock down the premises are regularly open on 5 days a week.

Sunday services are, of course, the most important aspect of our church life with a regular attendance of 15 to 20.

The church, in conjunction with the Eden project led by John Lawson, is very active. The Light Night

Café continues on Tuesday evenings providing support for those with mental issues and on Wednesdays we have Bible study followed by coffee morning which is now very popular. So much so that a second coffee morning on Friday's, with free bacon baps, has been set up and on Thursdays the Youth Club has restarted.





Boys Brigade on Wednesdays and Scouts on Fridays have restarted and such is their popularity they have overflowed from the hall into the back of the sanctuary.

The Community Larder and Free-4-All continue to provide free food and household goods to families in need on Wednesday and Friday mornings

Our contacts with local supermarkets whereby we take their surplus stock for further distribution to the schools opposite and to people on the estate continue to fulfil a need which, sadly, has not gone away.

Our Christmas activities include the Christmas Tree Delights on December 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> including food and stalls and finishing with a Carol Service.



Gyula will be leading our service on Christmas morning. Then we will be opening our doors again on Christmas Day for lunch, aimed particularly at those who would otherwise be on their own.



### Washingborough

After a flurry of activity and excitement surrounding the arrival of Rev Jennifer Matthews, we hope she is now used to us and us to her.

We are now having services on most, but not all, Sunday mornings and our numbers have steadily climbed back up to 35-40 on a regular basis, including occasionally a few children and young people.

We have recently welcomed some new folk who have joined us from other Churches in the Lincoln area.

Our Saturday coffee mornings have resumed though just twice a month on the first and third Saturdays of the month 10am to 12 noon. All welcome.

We have also now started having coffee/tea again after morning services.

One or two groups started meeting again on our premises including Blokes Who Sing.

Our Wednesday evening Fellowship Group resumed meeting up again twice a month in chapel initially considering issues around Climate / Environment, to be replaced in December with an Advent Study course on Zoom repeated on a Tuesday afternoon in chapel.

We are actively seeking volunteers to fill various roles especially as various people have now stepped down, including Lesley Shapcott from her Stewards role which she had held for 11 years.

We look forward to what the New Year and later Spring has to bring us, not least the opportunity to meet or worship from time to time with folk from Rev Jennifer's other Churches.

### Welton and Dunholme

We are delighted to report that Autumn has seen a return to almost normality! We are missing our minister, Alan Swann, and hope he returns from sabbatical refreshed and renewed. In the meantime, Peter McCree has offered himself as another



worship leader, alongside Elaine Johnson and David Wilson, and we are very grateful to Rev Martin Amery who continues to prepare one service a month for us despite having to shield.

Coffee mornings have resumed on both Wednesday and Saturday each week; the art group and table tennis are back, as is Welton Counselling Practice which uses our premises, and a pilates group has begun on Thursdays. House groups are back in houses, although we are very grateful for the technology which enabled them to continue via zoom during lockdown. Ladies Fellowship reconvened in October, now meeting in the chapel in the afternoon on the second Thursday of the month rather than in the evening. This will be particularly appreciated by some members during the winter months. Men's Breakfast has had to find an alternative venue but starts again on 20<sup>th</sup> November at The Bottle and Glass in Normanby.

The annual Autumn Fair will not be going ahead but we look forward to welcoming friends from our vil-

lages and across the circuit to our 'Christmas Jumper' coffee morning, with cake stall, on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> December.

Sadly, we shared in the service of thanksgiving for the life of Doug Aisthorpe at the beginning of November. Doug, with his late wife, Trixie, was a long-standing and much-loved member of our congregation and truly the 'Father of our house', as one member put it. His simple and sincere faith, which he lived throughout his life, was an example to us all. He will be sadly missed and our deepest sympathies go to his sons, Andrew and Stephen, and their families.

Finally, we send all our friends across the circuit our best wishes for a blessed and peaceful Christmas and a happy and healthy new year.

Elaine Johnson

## Introducing—Rev'd Jennifer Matthews:

Before coming to Lincoln, I was initially stationed in the Cheshire South Circuit, in the Chester and Stoke-on-Trent District in 2013, following my training for presbyteral ministry at the Queen's Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education in Birmingham.

Now in my eighth year of ministry, I was originally based in the Audlem Mission Area, having pastoral charge of three rural churches, whilst successfully completing my training as a probationer minister, with a BA in Christian Theology. Following ordination in 2016, I moved within the Circuit to the Crewe Mission Area, to have pastoral charge of three churches in both semi-rural and urban locations, and I also offered Circuit support, to a fourth church which was led by a Lay Leader.

Before going into ministry, I originally read for a BSc in Social Psychology at the University of Kent at Canterbury, and later undertook training in youthwork, as an Intensive Personal Advisor for Connexions. That involved working with disadvantaged young people aged 14-19yrs, providing support in a school environment and also within the community, to empower young people to overcome barriers to their progress, as well as those with learning disabilities up to age 25. I have also worked with other organisations supporting young people to identify the signs of bullying and to mentor peers against online, as well as direct contact bullying, and have also worked with young offenders on community orders.

Coming to Lincoln has been a blessing for me and I look forward to the journey ahead, working with the churches at Washingborough, Reepham, Cherry Willingham and Monks Road.





## There is a winter in all of our lives,

There is a winter in all of our lives,  
a chill and darkness that makes us yearn  
for days that have gone  
or put our hope in days yet to be.  
Father God, you created seasons for a purpose.  
Spring is full of expectation  
buds breaking  
frosts abating and an awakening  
of creation before the first days of summer.  
Now the sun gives warmth  
and comfort to our lives  
reviving aching joints  
bringing colour, new life  
and crops to fruiting.  
Autumn gives nature space  
to lean back, relax and enjoy the fruits of its labour  
mellow colours in sky and landscape  
as the earth prepares to rest.  
Then winter, cold and bare as nature takes stock

rests, unwinds, sleeps until the time is right.  
An endless cycle  
and yet a perfect model.  
We need a winter in our lives  
a time of rest, a time to stand still  
a time to reacquaint ourselves  
with the faith in which we live.  
It is only then that we can draw strength  
from the one in whom we are rooted  
take time to grow and rise through the darkness  
into the warm glow of your springtime  
to blossom and flourish  
bring colour and vitality into this world  
your garden.  
Thank you Father  
for the seasons of our lives

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## Calendar Dates - Dec 21 to Feb 22

Wednesday	Dec 01, 2021	World Aids Day
Monday	Dec 06, 2021	St Nicholas Day
Friday	Dec 24, 2021	Christmas Eve
Saturday	Dec 25, 2021	Christmas Day
Sunday	Dec 26, 2021	St Stephen's Day
Tuesday	Dec 28, 2021	Holy Innocents
Friday	Dec 31, 2021	Watch Night
Wednesday	Jan 05, 2022	Twelfth Night
Thursday	Jan 06, 2022	Epiphany
Sunday	Jan 09, 2022	The Baptism of Jesus
Wednesday	Feb 02, 2022	Candlemas
Monday	Feb 14, 2022	St. Valentine's Day
Tuesday	Mar 01, 2022	St. David's Day / Shrove Tuesday
Wednesday	Mar 02, 2022	Ash Wednesday
Friday	Mar 04, 2022	World Day of Prayer (Jeremiah 29:11)

# PRAYING TOGETHER

DECEMBER 2021 TO FEBRUARY 2022

1 Pray for God's continued blessing upon all our precious members and friends and their families.	9 Thank God for the opportunity of being together in prayer with others, shining a light of hope to the 'outside' world.	17 Thank God for the beauty of winter - for snow, icy window panes, evergreen trees, warm coats, sledding, and hot cocoa.	25 Pray for the hope of a better future for all.
2 Pray that God will help you to take time out to rest and relax, so you are more able to worship Him.	10 Pray that God will help you to see and appreciate kind words or loving acts; the beauty of the world around you.	18 Pray for Rev Alan Swann as he returns to his Circuit Duties after his much-needed sabbatical. Give thanks for Rev David Lawton who stepped up to cover.	26 Pray that all nations, our own included, <b>together</b> can find solutions to the many challenges facing humanity.
3 Pray that God will be with those whose week never seems to start, because there is no difference for them in the days. Every day is the same.	11 Pray for those on sabbaticals, offering special skills, or on Encounter programmes, who will work in and through cultures very different from their own.	19 Pray for all our ministers as they go about their daily work; imbue them with Christ-like qualities to further the Kingdom.	27 We live in a wonderful world, created by God. Pray that he will show us the way to bring it back to perfection—however long that takes.
4 Pray that God will reach out to all who need His love and forgiveness, so they will willingly turn to Him for comfort in their distress.	12 Pray for those coming to Britain from another country to serve in partnership here; for Global Mission Fellows and evangelists and the districts and circuits who host them. May they inspire and challenge us with all that they are and their relationship with	20 Pray that God will forgive us for allowing the cold, grey skies and short dark winter days to steal the joy of our hearts and help us use extra downtime to restore our energy and slow our schedules.	28 Pray that we are alert to our calling to serve one another; that we may do so, gladly, without prejudice to whoever needs our help.
5 Pray that God will reach out and lift those that are prevented from reaching their true potential, so they can take their rightful place in the world.	13 Pray for districts, circuits and churches who are developing new twinning relationships, sharing the Global Relationships Worship resources and faithfully giving to support the work of the World Mission Fund. May they know the richness of sharing in God's mis-	21 Pray that God will soften our hearts to look beyond the inconvenience of the season. For we know that without the tiring leg of the current season, the next one wouldn't be so welcome and exciting of a change.	29 Pray for <b>all</b> workers in our caring organisations, that they feel valued in their particular calling, thus enabling them to give the best care to their patients.
6 Pray that God will be close, now, to the oppressed of this world, those seeking justice, those whose lives are torn apart by wars, those who are being bullied.	14 Pray for The Railway Mission, a nondenominational Christian organisation that cares for all who work on the railways regardless of faith, gender or sexual orientation.	22 Thank God for bringing us to another Winter, and another New Year. Bless us with hearts more like Jesus, patient and perseverant. Remind us that just as winter came, it will go.	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.
7 Compassionate God, be with those who need you. The unloved, the friendless, the oppressed, the sick, the dying, the bereaved. Take your love where we can't, or won't, reach.	15 God of all our days, we give thanks that at every stage of our lives there is a place for us.	23 Pray that the various organisations in the Lincoln Circuit, that provide for the needy and vulnerable, may continue with their valuable work.	31 Thank God for His unnumbered kindnesses to us. Help us to make good use of the riches of the earth. Help us to be generous, even as He is, and always avoid selfishness and greed.
8 Pray for people of the Methodist Church in Britain who sense God's call to serve in partnership with others across the world; for those mission partners who move to another country, and for the joy and challenge	16 Pray that we may be open to other cultures and willing to learn from them.	24 Pray that the world leaders and delegates of the COP26 conference in Glasgow honour their pledges and we can look forward to a better stewardship of our God-given planet.	