



## Stockport Circuit

Methodist and United Reformed Churches  
working in partnership



*Lets Celebrate!*

*Sharing good news*

**First Edition—February 2019**

Welcome to the first edition of the Circuit Newsletter.

Thank you to all who have contributed in sharing their GOOD NEWS for publication. We hope you enjoy reading what is happening across the Circuit, that you might share each others successes and be brave enough to try something new.

We hope that the Good News will encourage and excite you. Sometimes we fail to see what God is doing in our churches and in our lives. See the work of the Holy Spirit in and around us and thank God for His Faithfulness and love and inspiration.

### Contact

Tel: 0300 0110 015 (Option 1)

Email: [admin@stockportcircuit.org.uk](mailto:admin@stockportcircuit.org.uk)

**[www.stockportcircuit.org.uk](http://www.stockportcircuit.org.uk)**

### *A Message from our Superintendent*

*Ian Coverdale*



#### **Ministers – What an answer to Prayer**

Most of the churches will be only too well aware that with Richard Parkes' departure in 2017 followed by that of Stuart Radcliffe shortly after the circuit has struggled with ministerial staffing. We are very grateful for those who stepped into the gap especially as we know that both the Methodist and the United Reformed Churches do not have sufficient ministers.

At the start of this year's round of appointments only Lindsay Kemp's was definite. Raj Patta and Luiz Cardoso were only promised to us for the current year and Ian Coverdale was due to return to retirement. With three appointments to be filled it looked highly unlikely that we would get all three vacancies filled.

Amazingly all three are now good. Luiz & Raj's appointment to the circuit have been confirmed to 2023 & 2024 respectively. Rev Cathy Bird, an experienced superintendent from London, will take over from Ian when he retires in the summer.

This is more than we could have hoped for and gives the new circuit a settled ministerial team as the new Stockport Circuit comes into being. Praise God!

#### **Stockport United Circuit**

In September the eight churches of the current Stockport circuit will be joined by Dialstone Lane, Hazel Grove and Windlehurst Methodist churches from current Hazel Grove & Poynton circuit to form the new Stockport United Circuit. This change has been supported unanimously by both circuits and all eleven churches. It will give us a stronger circuit,

better able to weather the pressures that we have to withstand.

Already some of the incoming preachers are being seen in our pulpits and we look forward to seeing more.

New churches and new people will bring new insights with them. That is one of the delights of the enlargement. (Or challenges if you see things that way!) For at least a while, the life of the circuit will be more fluid as we look again at things we had maybe taken for granted.

More recently we have received an approach from the five congregations of the Romiley circuit to explore whether it is appropriate for them to also join the new circuit. Those discussions are at a very early stage and may come to nought. Even if they do proceed positively it will not be until 2020 at the earliest.

### **Eight New Local Preachers (Yes 8!)**

The circuit is served by a loyal band of a dozen Lay Preachers who give of themselves sacrificially to lead worship week by week. Non-preachers rarely realise just how much thought and preparation going into leading an hour of worship on a Sunday morning.

Joining their band, we are delighted to welcome Carol Jack from the Bramhall circuit. Half a dozen people from Connect@Tiviot Dale have started the training to become local preachers - Thiago de Oliveira, Maylla Francez, Mozanir Furrer, Alvaro Pereira jr, Daniel Pereira and Roberto Trevisan. Lastly, Beverley Wheeler from Heaton Mersey has also started the training. What an abundance of riches and another answer to prayer!

Over the coming months you will be seeing all these new faces leading worship around the circuit, not to mention the preachers from Hazel Grove & Poynton.

## ***Year of Prayer for Discernment***



The year is fast moving towards the Spring. How are you getting on with your prayers for discernment, as a church and individuals? We all need to try to discern what it is that we believe in relationship to what we value and how we grow and develop in Faith.

What is our vision for the future, how will that affect our journey through life both personally and as a church? It is not necessary to put on a great show because we can all pray alone as well as in church and groups. The important thing is to seek God's help in identifying what He is asking us to get involved in or what to do or where to go so that we can be assured that we are travelling in the right direction.

You should have received a prayer card from your Pastoral Care secretary please use this to remind you to pray for the District, the Circuit for local Churches and yourself.

Please see your notice boards or the circuit website (Under News, Year of Prayer) for upcoming events throughout the year.

If you have not yet signed up for the Prayer Day at The Chapel in the fields please consider doing so.



## *Prayer for Discernment*

*Open our eyes Lord, that we may  
see the opportunities before us*

*Open our ears Lord, and help us to  
listen for you speaking to us*

*Open our lips Lord that we may  
speak of your love for all people*

*Open our hearts Lord and fill us  
with your Holy Spirit*

*Take our lives Lord and help us to  
live to your praise and glory.*

*Amen*

## ***Grounded in Faith Growing together in Jesus.***

From the news being shared it is possible to see new things happening in the Clusters. Churches shared lots of activities during Advent and Christmas, Times of Services were shared and we have enjoyed trying a Circuit Service on a Sunday morning when all the churches closed and we all gathered together.

We are going to try this again in May, this time it will be at Trinity Methodist Church.

The Grounded in Faith Growing in Jesus project was not an easy undertaking and there was much soul seeking and discernment but praise God that he has honoured us and there is much evidence of the Holy Spirit at work among us.

Let us keep travelling hopefully knowing that Jesus is always before us and behind us helping us to share the GOOD NEWS of what a blessing it is to serve Him.

**Revive** is a Circuit event held once a month on Saturday evening at Edgeley Community church.

It offers an opportunity to come together for an evening of Praise and Prayer and to share in fellowship and **FOOD!!!**

Food is served at 5.30pm and Prayer and Praise starts at 6.00pm.

Everyone is welcome, so come and bring your friends and family.

## *ReGenerate:*

Regenerate: fellowship through faith, fun and food! A group for the young-ish and young at heart!

The idea for Regenerate started Heaton Mersey Methodist Church, when a few of us aged 30's, 40's and 50's decided that we wanted something Christian based that enabled us to spend time together in fellowship. It is so often the case that Sunday mornings are spent busy, many of us have roles in church and busy lives outside of church, but we knew that we wanted to spend time in each other's company and more importantly in the company of other Methodists. We started meeting once a month at various different places, we had been to each other's houses and out for food, we tended to mix it up between primarily social and primarily faith based activities.

As time went on our Sunday evening's together became something to really look forward to, and it wasn't long before God called us to open the group to a wider audience. We had an email from Reverend Lyndsey and Reverend Raj, regarding fellowship of those of us under 60 in the circuit, when we meet it became clear what was the best thing to do and we decided that our little group was too good to be kept to ourselves. We opened it up to the circuit, and that was truly a blessing. As mentioned we try and have a good mixture of faith and fun and usually alternate between someone sharing something faith related in their home and us all going somewhere for food or an activity. If we are at someone's house we always have a bring and share and start the evening off with food, then we have discussions based around something that we wish to share. We've spoken about Christian Mindfulness, watched programs about religious teachings and

discussed that, read scripture or poetry and talked about its impact, and at Christmas we filled a number of Rucksacks for the Wellspring appeal and discussed the role Christians should play in alleviating poverty. Alternating with this we have been bowling, for carveries, for pizza and are looking for our next fun group activity.

As well as the initial cohort from Heaton Mersey, we regularly have attendees from St Johns and Davenport and welcome any other members who feel they would like to join us. The life of a Christian is busy sometimes, there are not always enough of us for all the jobs that can need doing in the Church and it's a danger that faith becomes about infrastructure and logistics and less about the God's grace and power in our lives. So if you are young-ish or young at heart and want to be refreshed and share in this act of fellowship, then come and join us. Forget about the work that needs doing on the church, the hymns that need practicing, the pots that need washing and the events that need staffing, come along and share in life with other Methodists.



## Christ Church



On March 3rd it will be our church anniversary. In 1978, Reddish green Methodist and Reddish URC joined forces. 41 years! Where did the time go?

We finished our pantomime on 3rd Feb. Puss in boots this year. It's on for 8 nights over two weeks and full houses except for the Wednesday when it snowed quite a lot. Some hardy souls braved it, and we had a good night.

Thanks to all the other churches who support us, it's good to see you.

Over the past few months there has been an influx of young families attending Christ Church on Sunday Mornings. To join in our new family group meeting called Fun On Sunday.

The group meet in the hall downstairs at the same time as the morning service upstairs in church and then the children, parents and helpers join the main congregation for the end of the service. The children have a mix of games craft work and stories following a particular Bible story or theme each week. This has been a remarkable transformation after several years of having no children present at Sunday Service.

There is a fantastic change to the morning service when the children come in to show off their activities and talk about the Bible stories they have been learning. The buzz of energy and enthusiasm is exhilarating.

Fun on Sunday is closely linked with our Green Group Youth organisation (the junior department of our dramatic society 'The Green Group'). Green Group Youth meet on a Monday evening to learn about theatre work and they put on all children shows to complement the regular round of plays and pantomimes.

## Connect@Tiviot Dale



It is hard to believe that we are coming towards the first anniversary of the birth of the church at Connect! So much has happened in this first year and we have been so excited to see what God has been doing amongst us and through us. We are grateful for all your prayers and hope that these good news stories will help you to keep praying for the church and for the work that God is doing here.

The first thing to give thanks for is the number of people that God has led here to find and serve, Jesus. Through Baptism people have shown their commitment to following Jesus and have acknowledged how knowing him has changed their lives. Through reception into Membership, people have shown their desire to serve Christ as part of the family here. Some of these people have felt able to give testimony about their journey with God, and this has been such a blessing to all who hear how knowing Jesus can transform a life. We have also been able to welcome people who have been to the AA meeting held at Connect on Sunday evenings into worship on a Sunday afternoon.

This year has also seen the development of the "Bridge" outreach work. Several members of the church lead this ministry, which aims to 'Bridge the gap' for people who find themselves in need. Tesco have been willing to donate food and clothing to support this outreach and we have secured funding for a worker to work alongside the volunteers for about 10 hours a week. God is giving us a heart for helping the homeless and some of the members of the church go out onto the streets regularly to offer practical support as well as prayer. We are also planning to offer a Christians Against Poverty (CAP) Life Skills course.

At Christmas we met three times to worship in a service that included praise, singing, preaching and testimony. Through being blessed themselves, the worship team and those taking part, were able to bless

many people who came, some of whom have chosen to come and worship with us regularly since then.

In January we held our first “Encountering God” Day. This was a full day of learning, listening to God and sharing, that truly touched the lives of those who came. It was amazing to see what God can do in just a few hours, when we give him our full attention. We plan to offer more of these days in the future.

Also in January, we held our first Women’s Conference – which we called the “Her Conference”. On this day we welcomed over 50 women to share and learn about their identity in God. This was a time of great blessing that touched women from the church, from the wider circuit, as well as reaching out to those who did not yet know Jesus. The men of the church were an amazing support on this day, welcoming all who came, preparing refreshments with love and care, and helping with music for worship.

We have also seen God at work in the challenges that we face. Whilst we were so grateful for the building that we were given, it does need some attention and work. The amount of money necessary seemed like a mountain to climb, but through the generosity of two churches in the circuit, and, we pray, through a Connexional Grant that we are waiting to hear about, it seems that God is enabling us to do what needs to be done. We are so thankful for this and feel that this affirms the vision that God has given us for being His church in this place and time.

At Connect we Belong, Believe, Become – each person is encouraged to walk with Jesus and to find out what ministry God is calling them to. We hope that with the good news that we have shared here that you will be encouraged about the work that God can do in your church. God bless you, and thank you for your prayers, please keep praying for us.

The church at Connect@Tiviot Dale.

## *Davenport Methodist Church*

The Church family at Davenport is happy to share the following good news!

God has blessed us by leading new members to our family. It is wonderful to get to know people and to hear about the journey with God that has led them to become part of His family at Davenport. We feel that the Spirit is moving strongly amongst us in this place.

Two of the church members have been planning and leading worship (along with other musicians from the church) that uses more contemporary worship songs to explore God’s word. This has given the church family another way to explore God and has been a blessing because of that.

We have been building on links with our local Schools, welcoming a whole Primary School in one day, a Year Group at a time, so that they could learn more about what a church is and explore for themselves. We received some beautiful work as a gift that the children had done in response to their visit. We also welcomed a Nursery School and children from a Local Primary School for Harvest celebrations. In December, we welcomed children from local Schools to share in an Ecumenical Christmas celebration – they sang to us and to each other, heard the Christmas story, as well as joining in with Christmas prayers. This was a blessing that everyone enjoyed and which gave us the opportunity to start to build relationships with the children and their parents.

Over Christmas we also looked more to the cluster that we are in and tried to find ways of celebrating together.

We joined Trinity for their Carol Service and were grateful for the care and preparation that had gone into providing refreshments and



decorations, all of which helped to create a lovely atmosphere to worship in.

Our Junior Church members were glad to be invited to Heaton Mersey for a Christmas celebration and had a wonderful time – the Christmas Tree that they decorated was admired in church for the rest of the season!

We were joined by folks from Trinity for the Christingle service on Christmas Eve at Davenport. We welcomed several people and families who had not been to worship at the church before and were very encouraged by the opportunity this gave us to talk and share with them.

On Christmas Day, some members of the congregation led worship. We welcomed several visitors on this day too and were able to catch up with old friends as well as make new ones.

The leader of the Brownies and Guides groups at Davenport saw the opportunity to apply for funding to improve the kitchen which was in need of some considerable updating. We are pleased to report that this funding application was successful, and that along with a bequest from a long-standing member, we should have enough money to make some real improvements that will benefit everyone who uses the building and that might help us find more opportunities to share with others.

The prayer time that takes place on a Sunday morning on the first and third Sundays of the month, has continued to grow – it has been a blessing to make time to pray together for the World, for the church and for the people we know to be in need.

We thank God for these blessings and pray for more to come.

The church family at Davenport

## *Edgeley Community Church (Methodist/URC LEP)*



Mana Potion – a new initiative

Mana Potion - our board games for mental wellbeing event - has been running monthly since August last year. Each event appears to be growing in attendees with numbers reaching 20+. It is generating a strong community shown through people being keen to remain in contact despite being unable to attend on occasions.

We have had conversations around mental health, theology and our community and have developed on-going relationships with several visitors. All feedback from visitors has been positive and we have been approached by other church affiliated groups in both the URC and Methodists for advice regarding their own similar projects.

We have had people from all ages and across Stockport and Greater Manchester. We are thankful to ECC for their support through the provision of premises etc. and members who have come to assist with refreshments, donated games, or just come along to support us and would like to express our gratitude.

We have been active in advertising and attending other community

events such as St. Matthews Community Day. And have had members from other Churches take an interest in getting involved.

Our feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, and some regulars are taking real ownership of the group. This is positive and shows real longevity.

Looking forward there does appear to be a need we are meeting and should continue to provide the service.

Mana Potion started off as a pilot, independent group meeting at ECC. With overwhelming support from the church, Mana Potion has been formerly adopted as a church group, meeting an obvious vital need in the community.

Mana Potion meets monthly on either a Saturday or Sunday from 3 – 8pm, with the intention that people can drop in at a time to suit their circumstances.

The next session is on Sunday 17th March.



The Stewards from St John's and the Leadership Team from Edgeley met together for the 2nd time last Thursday evening. We agreed to have a prayer walk between the 2 churches, probably in June. More details to follow.

We are to continue having joint worship once a month.

## Trinity

At Christmas, Trinity and Davenport, being in the same cluster *and* being close to each other geographically, worked together on their Christmas celebrations.

On the Sunday before Christmas, Davenport joined Trinity for an afternoon *Carols by Candlelight* service, held in the hall, around tables with drinks and cakes throughout.

What was so wonderful was the number of people who came and who brought friends and family and so there were about 60 – 70 of us, including some of the uniformed organisations, which was lovely.

On Christmas Eve folk from Trinity joined Davenport for their Christingle Service. Again we were surprised and delighted by the number of people who came.

One other event we held for the first time was an open air Carol Service at Trinity Cricket Club. We met at the bottom of the road and processed to the Clubhouse singing *Once in Royal David's City*. After the service, the Cricket Club laid on a hotpot supper, and mince pies and coffee. We were joined by several people not connected with the Church or Cricket Club but who enjoyed the Carols and supper.

During Advent, Christmas and for a while afterwards, Davenport, Trinity and Café Worship at St. Mary's saved money at Bible Study and at home for All We Can's Extraordinary Gifts. Together we raised enough money to buy a Farmyard Set for a vulnerable family – chickens, a sheep, a goat and a pig, together with training – a toilet for a family in Zimbabwe (which has been very much in the news recently) 4 Super Stoves for families in Ethiopia and bees (plus training) also for a family in Ethiopia. For several weeks, there were discussions in both Churches about the merits of one gift over another, and people were invited to choose, the gifts chosen being the ones with the most 'votes' (or should that be 'likes')





## Heaton Mersey

So many positive things are happening at Heaton Mersey that excites us:

Last September at we decided to change the name of our monthly 'Who Let The Families Out' session. We wanted a name that reflected what we were doing so we became FamilyChurch@10.



At the same time, we also began to hold Sunday Club on alternate weeks where we welcome parents and children of any age. We have continued to hold a monthly Café Church. Through all of these activities we have begun to see our families more often which has been fantastic. 11 young children attended on Sunday 10 February 2019 with their families.

We are trying to build on this by holding termly after school fun sessions to which the children invite their friends to come along. So far, we made a scarecrow for a community event and we painted and decorated a Christmas tree as part of our community Christmas event. We are planning a music session!

At our Christmas event we invited the groups that meet at Heaton Mersey: The Brownies, Playtime@Church, Who Let the Dads Out, Do Your Thing Choir and the churches in our Cluster to decorate a Christmas tree. It was a great way to involve other groups and churches and once again we found it to be successful and a really happy time of fun and sharing.

At Harvest we held an All Age Worship in church led by Rev Raj and the worship leaders. This was a tremendous success and we plan to do the same for our Church Anniversary.

All of these activities are contributing to the life of our lively growing church.

On the 30th December the time of the Sunday Service was changed to 4 pm.

Often the last Sunday of the year seems a little strange with the Christmas festivities over and New Year still a few days away. The different time slot made it possible for the Minister to take the service. Raj talked about our manifesto for the year ahead. Our musician, Dr Robin Stevens led the singing of carols and songs as well as giving us a solo of his musical interpretation of Wesley's 'What shall I do my God to love.'

The Church was arranged cafe style and the service concluded with refreshments.

We were joined by some friends from St Peter's Chaplaincy making a congregation of around 50.

Meeting at a different time gave the service that extra something! It was a meaningful time of worship as we marked the end of the old year and looked forward to the new.

This is something we might well do again.

### Church Development:

Heaton Mersey offers a varied programme of Services and groups to suit all age groups, for those who are lifelong members to those who are new in Faith

Our Church Development Worker, Tracy Brennan, continues to instigate initiatives and progress those already in place.

Café Church: This now takes place every month (was once per quarter). This is our main mission opportunity for many of our fellowship who do not attend our other forms of service regularly.

These services have been led by Tracy and Jill Elston the Christians in Schools Trust worker for the Heaton's Churches Partnership. Rev



Raj and our Worship Leaders have led some of them as well as visiting Local Preachers.

These informal services are generally enjoyed by all as well as the delicious coffee and home-made cakes!

A variety of visiting preachers continue to enhance our worship.

HMMC are still able to provide live music for worship. This involves a number of musicians; some of whom come from other churches to assist us.

We are currently reviewing the church property with the intention of enhancing the worship area, lounge and facilities.

HMMC is one of only 3 churches in the Manchester and Stockport District who have maintained their membership numbers.

HMMC fellowship includes many people who worship with us who from other denominations or who also attend services at other churches.

HMMC members are very much involved in the HCP Schools Work including the Easter Card Competitions for 2018 and 2019.

### **Heaton Moor United Church**

Heaton Moor United Church has introduced two new style services on the alternate 1st Sunday of the month. The first is called Super Sunday, which starts at 10.00 with activities based on a bible story for everyone young or old . This is then followed by an all age worship at 10.45 . The second will be a cafe church, with coffee being served in the worship area alongside the service. Next SS is 7/4 and Cafe church are 3/3 and 5/5 .



So there you have it!!! Who says that nothing is happening? Sometimes we get discouraged but it seems very clear to me that the Holy Spirit is alive and well in the Circuit. There is evidence that *Grounded in Faith, Growing in Jesus* is beginning to bear fruit even if it is only in tender shoots. New disciples are being made and lots of new things are being tried. There is much to be enthused and excited about. The Clusters are beginning to work together and we thank God for developments at Connect@Tiviot Dale. Thank you to everyone who has contributed.



Christine and Amy hope that you have enjoyed this first edition. Feedback would be appreciated and if you have any ideas about a future publication please get in touch.

### **Contact**

Tel: 0300 0110 015 (Option 1)

Email: [admin@stockportcircuit.org.uk](mailto:admin@stockportcircuit.org.uk)

**[www.stockportcircuit.org.uk](http://www.stockportcircuit.org.uk)**