



# The **Methodist** Church **Stamford Circuit**

Registered Charity :1160930

**September-November 2025**



**SOIL ~ SEED ~ SEASONS  
NURTURE ~ GROW ~ FLOURISH**

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**The Circuit Newsletter exists to build up fellowship across the Stamford Methodist Circuit. Items for inclusion in the Circuit Newsletter should be:**  
*Inspiring, encouraging of faith and discipleship to promote the growth of church relationships within the Circuit.*

**Could you please send any articles for the December 2025 to February 2026  
Circuit Newsletter by Monday 10th November 2025 to  
Email: [admin2322@gmail.com](mailto:admin2322@gmail.com)  
Or by post to:  
The Circuit Office at Stamford Methodist Church**

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily  
those of the Stamford Methodist Circuit or the Methodist Church in Great Britain

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Dear friends,

Superintendent's Letter

Welcome to this edition of the Circuit Newsletter as we begin a new Methodist Church year.

Looking back to the 2024/25 Methodist Church year, a personal highlight was my three month period of sabbatical leave. (Sabbaticals are granted to Methodist Church ministers every seven years – based on the 'sabbath' principle of the seven day cycle of work and rest which is reflected in the account of creation in the opening chapters of Genesis, the first book of the Bible).

I want to say THANK YOU for the gift of that sabbatical leave, for the purposes of reflection, renewal and refreshment. It is good to be back among you in the Stamford Methodist Circuit, and I hope that the evidence of my sabbatical – not least the renewal and refreshment – is obvious and will bear fruit as we continue to engage in God's mission together.

THANK YOU especially to those who carried extra burdens and responsibilities during my period of sabbatical leave, whether that was in the local churches or across the circuit. Your hard work and commitment, not always visible to other people, are appreciated greatly by me and others.

Some of you will be aware that not all of my sabbatical proposals worked out as I hoped they would. For obvious reasons, my planned leading of a pilgrimage group to the Holy Land did not happen. This made me acutely aware that, whilst I was resting and experiencing refreshment, the people of Gaza were facing unimaginable suffering. (At the time of writing, there are no signs of this situation changing anytime soon. Despite this, we must continue to pray and work in whatever ways possible for resolution of the conflict in Israel and the Palestinian Territories – and also in other areas of the world). During my sabbatical I have begun sharing in the Wednesday evening (6pm UK time) Zoom times of reflection and prayer organised by the Methodist Church's liaison office in Jerusalem. (More information, including the Zoom link, available by email - [office@mlojerusalem.org](mailto:office@mlojerusalem.org)).

My proposed trip to the Nixon Memorial Hospital in Sierra Leone proved logistically difficult to organise. I've learned quite a bit about liaison and communication with World Church partners during my sabbatical. As a result of meeting the Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church in Sierra Leone during his time at this year's Methodist Conference, my visit to Sierra Leone is being rescheduled for spring 2026.

One challenge which I faced on my sabbatical was where to worship on Sundays. Some weeks I attended worship at the church where my Mum worships (and where I grew up in the Sunday School and received my call to preach and to ordained ministry). On a few other Sundays I shared in worship at the churches in Leicester where Karl plays the organ. However, I also worshipped in a few other churches. On each occasion I found myself noticing the things which are done similarly or differently to in the churches which I serve as minister. It is possible to learn from and be challenged by experiences of church and worship beyond what is familiar to us. (Maybe you've had similar experiences when worshipping in other churches, e.g. whilst on holiday).

A thread running through what I've already written is the sense of being part of the Church which is much bigger and diverse than our local churches in the Stamford Circuit. This is something to rejoice about as we move into a new Methodist Church year. May we know God's blessings as we do so!

*Andrew*

## CHANGES AT EMPINGHAM

As many of you will know Empingham Methodist Church hosted the Community Post Office since 2003. For almost 22 years Adele, our postmistress served us well, always going the extra mile, and becoming a very good friend to us all. In June 2025 Adele retired, and the Post Office facilities in Empingham changed.

The village is now served by a weekly Mobile Post Office parked at the safest place in the village, the village pub car park from 2.15pm to 3.45pm every Tuesday afternoon.

Over the many years our church on a Monday afternoon had become an excellent social hub, with tea and cake, second-hand books and good friendship serving the village community well. To continue this good fellowship a couple from our church, Clare & Logan run a Lunch Club once a month. This is held on the first Monday of the month, at 1pm,. The other Mondays we meet at 2 – till 4pm with Tea & Cake, second-hand books, board games and friendship.

The new arrangements have proved very successful.  
Please pray for this new outreach facility.

## BOURNE



Our Strawberry Tea was held in June on what turned out to be one of the hottest days of the year. Because of the weather our numbers were down but we still raised over £300 for Brighter Future the charity in India which our church supports.



Thanks to all those who braved the heat to come and support us.

## Stamford Prison Fellowship Angel Tree Scheme

*This is a scheme to buy, and send, Christmas presents to the children of Prisoners at Stocken Prison.*

*This helps to build good relationships among prisoners' families.*

**The cost of each present would be approximately £15, including postage.**

**Your donations to this fund would be much appreciated.**

Any cheques need to be made payable to;

‘Stamford Prison Fellowship – Angel Tree’.

Your donations can be given to Maurice Wade;

17 Drift Avenue, Stamford, PE9 1UY.



***Many thanks and every blessing.***

Maurice and Judith





## **Stamford Dog Show & Family Fun Day Sunday 14th September**

The Stamford Dog Show has now been going for twenty years - originally arranged to help with the fundraising costs of refurbishing the Stamford Methodist Church. It has become a well established and well organised event supported by everyone in Stamford. During these past years this

event has raised £30,000 to support our Church's Mission Projects in both the local area and overseas.

Organising this event has been the responsibility of a small group of dedicated people who are now ready to hand over to another local organisation. We are very pleased to announce that the 2nd Stamford Scouts have agreed to take on this role.

For this, their first year, we shall be supporting them in whatever way they would like and Stamford Methodist Church will continue to hold our morning service on the Meadows at 10.30am and we will also run the Refreshment stall and some other stalls at the Show.

**We take this opportunity to wish the Scouts every success and hope that you will support them on the day !**



# **‘STOP THE BOAT’ PROTESTS**

## **Request for Prayer**

News came out at the beginning of September, with extremely short notice, that a group of people in Peterborough were planning a demonstration outside of the Dragonfly Hotel. This is a hotel which is housing asylum seekers. The aim of the demonstration was to scare them out of the hotel.

Charlotte Davis, our circuit safeguarding officer and member at Ryhall, began to organise a counter-protest and I joined them on the evening of 29<sup>th</sup> August outside the hotel.

One of my reasons for going was the passage I was preaching from on the following Sunday:

*“Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it. Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.” Hebrews 13:1-3.*

As we stood, in front of the hotel, with the police between the two groups, and I witnessed what was happening, my heart broke, because I could see the pain and fear in the protestors and in those in the hotel. As statements were shouted and threats made against me, those standing beside me and the people in the hotel and, as I overheard a few women talking to the police about their fears and frustrations, I could hear what the three groups had in common. I could see us all, brothers and sisters, and I imagined what it could be like if we could only lower our defences and find a way to move forward together.

- ♦ We all want the hotels to close.
- ♦ We all want the small boats to stop.
- ♦ We all want people to be able to live safely and in peace.
- ♦ But we are all looking in different directions and focussing our efforts in different ways on how to resolve the situation. We are divided and therefore weaker.

This is a massive issue which is tied up in the political, economic and social situation of our country, as well as what is happening around the world. None of us have any easy answers, but I do know that some of us around the Circuit are being called to respond in different ways.

Regardless of where you stand on this issue I am asking the following:

1. Please would you pray on every Friday evening from 5pm (or at some point over the evening) for **all of us** at the Dragonfly Hotel. Maybe praying for peace, for conversation, for fear to be overcome and for opportunities for this to move forwards in God’s will.
2. If you would like to join the counter protest please contact either Charlotte or myself and we will link you in to the group. Charlotte can be contacted through her safe-guarding email address (which is the contact address she uses rather than a personal email address) Safeguarding Stamford Methodist [\*\*smcsafeguarding@gmail.com\*\*](mailto:smcsafeguarding@gmail.com). I am at [\*\*revbekkiewright@gmail.com\*\*](mailto:revbekkiewright@gmail.com) or 07355 981564. Alternatively search for the Facebook page “Peaceful Peterborough Counter-Protest Organising Group.”

Thank you

Rev’d Bekkie Wright



## VE DAY CELEBRATIONS 2025

I was recently invited to talk with the children at St Augustine's School as part of their 'listening ear' library. The children were able to circulate and talk to myself and three others about **Victory in Europe**. I explained to them that as a Pacifist I could not celebrate victory in a battle but could celebrate the end of the war, and they understood this. I was too young, and living in Darlington, to see the effects of the war although we did have to be rationed for food. I told them of the estimated number of deaths caused by world war 2. An estimated death toll of between 70 to 85 million people, which is more than the current population of this country, 68.35 million. I reached 18 yrs at the time of conscription and was invited by the Queen to join the armed forces. It was my right, by law, to register as a Conscientious Objector, after an interview, Tribunal, 5 'wise men' decided I had a conscience. I worked in a hospital instead, caring for people not learning how to kill them. I explained to the children that my decision arose from my faith. If I believed in a God of love, how could I kill? If I believed in the teachings of Jesus (who is my neighbour) how could I kill? The children recognise who was their neighbour.

Jesus lived in an occupied country

.....**Love thy neighbour as thyself** & pray for those who persecute you.

.....**blessed are the meek** for they will inherit the earth

.....**blessed are the peacemakers** for they will be called the sons of God

I have never understood, and still don't, how Christians will obey the call of the state ahead of their faith.

### **If the war goes on**

Words by John Bell & Graham Maule. The Iona Community (For a hymn but not the tune)

If the war goes on  
And children die of hunger,  
And the old men weep  
For the young men are no more,  
And the women learn  
to dance without a partner  
Who will keep the score?

If the war goes on  
And the rich increase their fortunes  
And the arms sales soar  
As new weapons are displayed,  
When a fertile field  
Turns to no-man's-land tomorrow  
Who'll approve such trade?

If the war goes on  
And the truth is taken hostage;  
And new horrors lead to the euphemise,  
When the calls for peace  
Are declared unpatriotic,  
Who'll expose the lies?

If the war goes on  
Will we close the doors to heaven,  
If the war goes on,  
Will we breach the gates of hell;  
If the war goes on,  
Will we ever be forgiven,  
If the war goes on.....?

If the war goes on  
And daily bread is terror,  
And the voiceless poor  
Take the road as refugees;  
When a nation's pride  
Destines millions to be homeless,  
Who will heed their plea?

So I would ask our Church: What are our priorities? Who comes first, Jesus or the state?  
How do we promote peace and reconciliation? Where and how do we let our government,  
MP, and community know where we stand? Is that important to us?

George Hetherington (Stamford Methodist Church)



# AUTUMN ANAGRAMS



IERSKLREABCB	
MUKNIPP	
SHRATEV	
GALESBETVE	
XINOQUE	
GGDEHEHEO	
RCNOAS	
IEPN NEOC	
LLA NISATS AYD	
LAL ULOSS DYA	
LAESVE	
TEHCS UNT	
MAUTNU IRAN	

**Cauliflowers Fluffy** is an English harvest song which is sung at harvest time in schools all over the United Kingdom. It also appears in the UK hymn book “Come and Praise”. Published by the BBC in 2009

Cauliflowers fluffy and cabbages green  
Strawberries are sweeter than any I've seen  
Beetroots purple and onions white  
All grow steadily day and night!

The apples are ripe and the plums are red  
The broadbeans are sleeping in their blankety bed

Blackberries are juicy and rhubarb sour  
Marrows fattening hour by hour  
Gooseberries hairy and lettuces fat  
Radishes round and runner beans flat

The apples are ripe and the plums are red  
The broadbeans are sleeping in their blankety bed.

Orangey carrots and turnips cream  
Reddening tomatoes that used to be green  
Brown potatoes in little heaps  
Down in the darkness where the celery sleeps

The apples are ripe and the plums are red  
The broadbeans are sleeping in their blankety bed.



## Outrageous Grace

I thought I would share these words from a song by Robin Mark that tells of the hope God gives us in a troubled world. I find it helps to take time to reflect on the power of the blessings God gives, how the darkness in the world can never put out the light of God. His goodness is always there in the midst of everything. He goes on loving us, no matter what.

*There's a lot of pain but a lot more healing,  
There's a lot of trouble but a lot more peace.  
There's a lot of hate but a lot more loving,  
There's a lot of sin but a lot more grace.  
There's a lot of fear but a lot more freedom,  
There's a lot of darkness but a lot more light.  
There's a lot of cloud but a lot more vision,  
There's a lot of perishing but a lot more life.*

The chorus talks of God's "Outrageous Grace" in giving us His Son to save us all - an awesome and sacrificial love shown to each one of us, the biggest blessing of all!

*"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16)*

Beryl Teasdale

### **ALL THINGS FUNERAL!**

Friends,

Maybe not a topic you really want to think about, but one that is so important regardless of age and state of health.

Over the last few months a couple of our churches have come across situations where a church member has died, but the pre-paid funeral plan they set up (sometimes many years previously), no longer reflects what they would have liked for their funerals. In particular, when a person has come to faith in later years but the funeral plan is for a humanist funeral with no involvement from the church.

Please do, from time-to-time, have a look back at any plans you have in place to make sure they still reflect you.

Please also speak to family members or write down what your wishes would be for your funeral so that your loved ones have some guidance of what to do when the time comes.

Finally, it may help your family and the church to have contact details for one another, so that we can join together early on.

If you are the last in your family line then it is also alright for you to let your minister or your pastoral visitor know of any plans you might want.

Blessings

Rev'd Bekkie Wright

# Stamford and Rutland Circuit Diary

Date	Time	Event	Venue
<b>Monthly</b>			
Every Tuesday	8.30/45am	Circuit Staff Team Meeting	Via Zoom
<b>SEPTEMBER 2025</b>			
Tuesday 2nd	7pm	Circuit Leadership Team Meeting (CLT)	Empingham MC
Sunday 7th	6pm	Circuit Service led by Rev'd Dr Sonia Hicks ~ Chair of the Northampton District	Oakham MC
Tuesday 9th	2pm	Sabbatical Support Group	Empingham MC
Wednesday 10th	7.30pm	Circuit Local Preacher & Worship Leaders Meeting	Thurlby MC
Wednesday 10th	10.30am	Circuit Safe Guarding Meeting	Ryhall MC
Thursday 11th	7pm	Meeting ~ Circuit Farm Weekend 2026~ or what?	Ryhall MC
Thursday 18th	7.30pm	Circuit Meeting	Oakham MC
Saturday 20th		Northampton Methodist District Synod	At Witney and via zoom
<b>OCTOBER 2025</b>			
Saturday 11th	10am	Circuit Treasurers Meeting	Ryhall MC
Saturday 18th	9.30am	Online Church Meeting	Via zoom
<b>NOVEMBER 2025</b>			
Saturday 8th	10am	Sharing and Encouragement for Church Stewards	Empingham MC

## STAMFORD PRISON FELLOWSHIP

We are having an information afternoon, for interested people, as volunteers, to come and find out about the Stamford Christian Prison Fellowship, assisting at Stocken Prison.

The meeting is at the Stamford Free Church, Kesteven Road, PE9 1SU.

On Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> September at 2-4 pm.

Light refreshments will be provided.

Further information from Mrs Susan Macey. Tel. 01778 422181.

Looking forward to welcoming you there.

Thank you. Maurice Wade

## **Wednesday Fellowship at Stamford Methodist Church**

**At 2pm in the downstairs hall**

- ♦ 3rd September Speaker Rev Andrew Hollins Subject Devotional
- ♦ 10th September Speaker Mr Chris Gallagher Subject Catholic Faith & Education
- ♦ 17th September Speaker Mr Neville Favel Subject Piano Recital
- ♦ 24th September Speaker Mrs Helen Walton Subject Fresh Hope Ministry
- ♦ 1st October Speaker Outing 2.30pm at Greatford Church Talk & Tea
- ♦ 8th October Speaker Rev Andrew Hollins Subject devotional at Priory Court 2.30pm
- ♦ 15th October Speaker Mr Hugh Allen Subject Les Isaacs
- ♦ 22nd October Speaker Mrs Zoe Wade Subject 90 Days in Europe
- ♦ 29th October Speaker Mr Ron Curtis Subject Eric Liddell
- ♦ 5th November Speaker Rev Andrew Hollins Subject Devotional
- ♦ 12th November Speaker Mrs Corinna Selby Subject Remembrance
- ♦ 19th November Speaker Mr Eddie Adams Subject Gardens of Italy
- ♦ 26th November Lessons and Carols
- ♦ 3rd December Speaker Rev Andrew Hollins Subject Advent Service


### **Christmas Break**

- ♦ 14th January Speaker Rev Andrew Hollins Subject Devotional
- ♦ 21st January Subject Sharing Meeting Musical Memories, Stories etc..
- ♦ 28th January Speaker Mr Harrish Bisnauthsing Subject Life Story

Everyone is welcome to our Fellowship. There is no pressure to come every week.

If you are interested in any of these subjects do come along.


You will get a very warm welcome and light refreshment before you leave.

		7 <sup>th</sup> Sept	14 <sup>th</sup> Sept	21 <sup>st</sup> Sept	28 <sup>th</sup> Sept	5 <sup>th</sup> Oct	12 <sup>th</sup> Oct	19 <sup>th</sup> Oct
	<b>Lectionary</b>	Ordinary 23	Ordinary 24	Ordinary 25	Ordinary 26	Ordinary 27	Ordinary 28	Ordinary 29
	<b>Prayers</b>	Pastoral Visitors	Thurlby Church	Uppingham Church	Deepings Church	Empingham Church	Stamford Church	Local Preachers
<b>Bourne</b>	10.30am	Pursehouse	Atwell-King	Robson HF	Wright HC	Fytche	Jones	Pocock HC
		6pm @ Oakham						
<b>Deepings</b>	10.30am	Jones	Wright HC	Love	Atwell-King	Hensman	Booker HC	Cappitt
	4.00pm	6pm @ Oakham	Local Worship MC	6pm DMG			MC Wright	6pm Wright CT
<b>Empingham</b>	10.45am	Bailey		Jones HF	Cockburn Cafe / HC	Collins		Wright Cafe / HC
		6pm @ Oakham	4pm Wright TTC				4pm Jones TTC	
<b>Ketton</b>	6.00pm	6pm @ Oakham	J Allen	Hollins HC	Rose HF	Local Worship	Law	Hollins HC
<b>Oakham</b>	10.45am	Hollins HC	Hensman	Pursehouse	Local Worship	Cappitt	Cockburn HF	Gent HC
		6pm Hicks Circuit Service	3pm Collins EAW				3pm Hollins EAW	
<b>Ryhall</b>	10.30am	Wright HF	Law	Hollins HC	Local Worship	Wright HC	Roberts	Cameron
		6pm @ Oakham						
<b>Stamford</b>	10.30am	Gent HC	Hollins Dog Show	Cameron	Hensman A / HF	Hollins HC	Local Worship	Hollins The Well 20th Anniversary A
	6.00pm	6pm @ Oakham			Booker Oasis			
<b>Thurlby</b>	10.30am	Cappitt	Pocock HC	Wright HF	Local Worship	Cameron	Bailey	Collins
		6pm @ Oakham						
<b>Uppingham</b>	10.45am	Ruzvidzo	Local Worship	Booker HC	Hollins CT / HF	C Allen	Hollins Cafe / HC	Angele
		6pm @ Oakham						
<b>Sunday Prayers online</b>	10.30am	Atwell-King	Wright	Law	Cockburn	Wright	Hollins	Local Worship

## REFERENCES

**A** = All Age Worship **Café** = Café Church **CA** = Church Anniversary **EAW** = Easy Access Worship  
**HC** = Holy Communion **Rem** = Remembering Service **T** = Transport maybe required (Church Stewards to please check with Preacher) **TTC** = Tea Time Church **U** = United Service **MC** = Messy Church **DMG** = Deepings Music Group

Local Worship is intended to be planned, prepared and led using the gifts of Local Church members. (Church Stewards are responsible for coordinating these arrangements).

		<b>26<sup>th</sup> Oct</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Nov</b>	<b>9<sup>th</sup> Nov</b>	<b>16<sup>th</sup> Nov</b>	<b>23<sup>rd</sup> Nov</b>	<b>30<sup>th</sup> Nov</b>
	<b>Lectionary</b>	Ordinary 30	Ordinary 31	Ordinary 32 Remembrance Sunday	Ordinary 33 Safeguarding Sunday	Sunday before Advent Christ the King	Advent 1
	<b>Prayers</b>	Northampton District	Work with Young People	Ketton Church	Bourne Church	Oakham Church	Ryhall Church
<b>Bourne</b>	10.30am	Love	Local Worship	Hollins	Wright HC	Law	Sworn
<b>Deepings</b>	10.30am	Local Worship	Collins	Pocock	Cameron	Wright HC	Bailey
	4.00pm			Wright MC	6pm DMG		
<b>Empingham</b>	10.45am	Local Worship	C Allen	Wright US		Local Worship Cafe	Gent HC
					4pm Wright TTC		
<b>Ketton</b>	6.00pm	3pm Wright	3pm @ Uppingham	3pm Henson	3pm Hollins HC	3pm Wright	10.30 Tinwell Hollins CT / HC
<b>Oakham</b>	10.45am	Fytche	Cameron	Law	Ruzvidzo T	Hollins HC	J Allen
			3pm @ Uppingham	3pm Hollins EAW / HC			6pm CT @ All Saints
<b>Ryhall</b>	10.30am	Ruzvidzo Café T	Wright HC	Pursehouse	Love	Fytche Café	Jones
<b>Stamford</b>	10.30am	Jones	Hollins HC	9.45 Cockburn 11 @ War Mem	Atwell-King	Local Worship Mission A	Booker
	6.00pm		3pm @ Uppingham			Hollins Oasis	
<b>Thurlby</b>	10.30am	Wright HC	Booker	US @ St. Firmins	Bell CA	Jones	Wright HC
<b>Uppingham</b>	10.45am	J Allen	Cappitt	Jones	Hollins HC	Cheng	Cameron
			3pm Hollins Rem				
<b>Sunday Prayers online</b>	10.30am	Hensman	Jones	Hollins	Jones	Cockburn	Pursehouse

<b>Sunday 7th Septemebr</b> Deuteronomy 30:15-20 Psalm 1 Philemon 1-2 Luke 14:25-33	<b>Sunday 2nd November</b> Isaiah 1:10-18 Psalm 32:1-7 2 Thessalonians 1:1-4, (5-10), 11-12 Luke 19:1-10
<b>Sunday 14th September</b> Exodus 32:7-14 Psalm 51:1-10 1 Timothy 1:12-17 Luke 15:1-10	<b>Sunday 9th November</b> Job 19:23-27a Psalm 17::1-9 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5, 13-17 Luke 20:27-38
<b>Sunday 21st September</b> Amos 8:4-7 Psalm 113 1 Timothy 2:1-7 Luke 16:1-13	<b>Sunday 16th November</b> Malachi 4:1-2a Psalm 98 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13 Luke 21:5-19
<b>Sunday 28th September</b> Amos 6:1a, 4-7 Psalm 146 1 Timothy 6:6-19 Luke 16:19-31	<b>Sunday 23rd November</b> Jeremiah 23:1-16 Psalm 46 Colossians 1:11-20 Luke 23:33-43
<b>Sunday 5th October</b> Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4 Psalm 37:1-9 2 Timothy 1:1-14 Luke 17:5-10	<b>Sunday 7th December</b> Isaiah 2:1-5 Psalm 122 Romans 13:11-14 Matthew 24:36-44
<b>Sunday 12th October</b> 2 Kings 5:1-3,7-15b Psalm 111 2 Timothy 2:8-15 Luke 17:11-19	<b>Sunday 14th December</b> Isaiah 11:1-10 Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19 Romans 15:4-13 Matthew 3:1-12
<b>Sunday 19th October</b> Genesis 32:22-31 Psalm 121 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5 Luke 18:1-8	<b>Sunday 21st December</b> Isaiah 35:1-10 Psalm 146:5-10 <i>or Canticle: Magnificat</i> (Luke 1:46b-55) James 5:7-10 Matthew 11:2-11

## **PEACE WALK for GAZA**

**A silent walk in solidarity with the people of Palestine, and in particular Gaza.  
STAMFORD - SATURDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER**

The people of Palestine have been silenced for over 75 years; their lands stolen, their culture eroded, their babies killed. This is Genocide. The Peace Walk will be silent to remember the people of Gaza that have been killed and those that remain.

**9.30am** A gazebo will be set up in St Michael's Churchyard, where walkers can collect an A3 poster with different messages, to hold on the walk, or a card '**GAZA**' to identify supporters. On the tables there will be leaflets & cards to distribute, our MP's message & posters advertising our four chosen charities, for which donations will be collected. We do not have any affiliation to these in any way, if you have any concerns please feel free to talk.

Chosen charities:

**Middle East Children's Alliance** <https://www.meccaforpeace.org/>

**UNICEF** <https://www.unicef.org/>

**Medical Aid for Palestine** <https://www.map.org.uk/>

**Gaza Formula Fund** <https://chuffed.org/project/138719-gaza-formula-funs>

**10-00 am the walk starts and continues until 4pm. To be joined, or re-joined, at any time.**

A3 posters can be changed for each walk. The walk will proceed from the gazebo along that side of the street to the Rohan shop, then cross to the other side of High Street, back to Ironmongers Street; up the left hand side to the top returning on the other side, turn left into High Street, up to Marks and Spencers crossroads and back to the gazebo. Repeat as often as you are able, and if need be have a break then start again.

**We ask walkers to be silent on route.** Anyone willing to stop and talk to interested members of the public & provide them with information or signpost them to the Gazebo, is more than welcome.

Our Mayor, Amanda Wheeler, will be joining us and hopefully the Stamford Mercury, Rutland & Stamford Radio, and East Midlands Today TV. Our MP has sent a letter of support (on Gazebo table). The police have been informed of our intentions, and stated we are within our rights.

If you would like to invite others to join us we would appreciate the support. Please ensure they have these guidelines. Dress code: whatever you feel comfortable in, however we do ask that you avoid any violent and upsetting imagery & potentially political symbols, especially those linked to proscribed groups. This is a peaceful, silent walk - we want to ensure that all feel safe in their freedom of speech & ability to take part without persecution.

I would be grateful if you can let me know as soon as possible of any others wishing to attend so that we have an idea of numbers and if we need any additional posters, etc.

George Hetherington - 01780 757439 or 07891 437914



## **I Was Reading.....**

God knows what's good for you and what's not, and all your pleading won't change His mind. But when your desire is to do His will, He promised "You will always have plenty "

The greatest risk, is taking no risk.

Love doesn't play it safe; it takes risks. Love doesn't make excuses; it takes responsibility. Love doesn't see problems; it seizes opportunities to step up and step in.

The life we strive for, is hidden in the life we lead.

A bible teacher wrote: "Satan doesn't mind when we build, so long as he's the head contractor. He'll make sure we smear God's name all over our dreams, then when they fail, it'll look like He failed

Wise people do foolish stuff, good people do bad stuff, and misguided people don't know what they're doing.

Faithfulness is not doing it how it has always been done. It's not preserving the status quo. No, we must never water down the gospel or promote biblical compromise for culture relevancy. Bottom line our message must never change, but our methods must change if we are to gather in the final harvest before the Lord of the harvest returns.

Life doesn't run smoothly, no matter how badly you want it to. So, build in time for interruptions, traffic jams, lost keys slow-moving people, etc.

When you pray, you risk looking foolish in the eyes of others. But receiving the miraculous can involve looking ridiculous, like Jesus telling servants to fill pots with water when what they needed was wine. Or rubbing clay on a blind man's eyes so that he would receive his sight. But the wedding guests drank the finest wine, and the blind man went home seeing. Why? Because they stood on the word of Jesus gave them.

The world offers promises full of emptiness. But Easter offers emptiness full of promise. Empty Cross, empty tomb, empty grave clothes... all full of promise.

A new day has dawned. We've woken up to the brightest, most momentous day in all of history. Today stretched across the entirety of the world, billions of people are celebrating the all-consuming, all-involving, all-encompassing fact that Jesus is alive.

Jesus healed a blind man by rubbing clay in his eyes and telling him to go and wash it off in the pool of Siloam. How far away was the pool? We didn't know. But he needed someone to hold his hand and walk with him until he reached it and his sight was restored. And that's what we have been called to do.

It's possible to miss God. It's possible for him to have been up to something, right before our eyes, and we didn't spot it.

With a sharp intellect and a good memory, you can retain lots of knowledge. But in order to have understanding, you must take the time to drill down and understand what you're seeing and hearing.

If we had forgotten the name of our God, or spread out our hands to a foreign god, would not God discover this? For he knows the secrets of the heart.

Sometimes we dispense forgiveness like a soft drink from vending machine-mechanically and with no feelings attached.

Those who have been forgiven so much by God should, of all people, forgive the relatively small things done to them by others.

Your thoughts create your feelings, and your feelings dictate your approach to life. So by changing the way you think, your offences against can change how you feel and how you approach life.

It's what you concentrate on that decides your amount of peace. So when trouble comes, focus on God's presence; He is with you, and He has promised that He will never leave you.

You have the choice of focusing on your troubles or focusing on the one who holds the solutions.

It's your past that qualifies you as a worshipper

Not all who Jesus healed were saved, but those who exhibited true faith were.

Logan Pemberton

## **Stamford Methodist Church**

### **The Well Café**

Help will be needed to cover the Wednesday shift at The Well Café at Barn Hill when Anne, one of our stalwart volunteers, moves away probably early October.

The shift is 10am to 2pm and could be a fortnightly 'job share' if that is more appropriate.



Please get in touch with Jan Hetherington on [janhetherington2@gmail.com](mailto:janhetherington2@gmail.com) if you can help or if you would like further information.

## Annual Trustees Report

In June the Circuit Meeting submitted our Trustee's Annual return to the Charity Commission. This is a document which sets out all that we have achieved as a Circuit in the past year, along with the policy documents we rely on and our current financial situation.

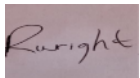
As we compiled this document we could see all that God has done for us and with us and we celebrated the journey we have been on, as well as looking forward to the next year.

Members of the Circuit Meeting asked that the narrative part of the Return be sent out to everyone in the Circuit Newsletter and so we have the pleasure of including it below.

### Introduction

I am pleased to be able to present the Annual Report and financial statements for the Stamford Methodist Circuit for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024.

It is my strongly held belief that the churches of our circuit remain firm in faith and resolute in their determination to offer the Gospel message to the people of Rutland and South Lincolnshire.



*Rev'd Rebecca Wright*

Circuit Minister and Acting Superintendent Minister

## Achievements and Performance 2023-2024

### Development of Circuit Vision

In the year 2022-2023 the Circuit Meeting had started to reflect on our circuit vision. This was driven by the need to respond to our financial situation. However, we were determined to ensure that the decisions we made were grounded in us fulfilling our mission in our communities. This work continued into 2023-2024 and structural changes were implemented to achieve that vision.

As a circuit, we were and we continue to be mindful of:

- ♦ Being responsible for our churches as well as being accountable to the District and, in turn, the Connexion;
- ♦ Being sure of who it is we serve, both in terms of God and the churches and congregations we have locally;
- ♦ Assessing what we have and what we need by way of resources and where our strengths and weaknesses are;
- ♦ Acknowledging that we are part of a bigger picture in the Kingdom of God; and
- ♦ How we honour the fact that our churches are part of both our circuit family, and their local communities, each seeking to be a unique and beautiful expression of a faith-filled Christian presence where they are.

## **Annual Trustees Report**

The Circuit Meeting of 21<sup>st</sup> June 2023 unanimously agreed that we should hold the vision of growth in all areas of our work, including, but not limited to, the size of our congregations, the number of members in our churches, the discipleship of those connecting with our churches, the support we offer to our communities and financial growth for both churches and the circuit.

In our Circuit Meetings and Circuit Leadership Team Meetings throughout 2023-2024 we named the practical implications of fulfilling that vision, realising that in order to grow we needed to first make cuts, which would give the space for growth to begin.

At the same time we wanted to celebrate the churches, their gifts and what they give to their local communities. On 21<sup>st</sup> June 2024 the Circuit Leadership Team met with a member of the Northampton District Mission Team, under the theme 'Soil, Seeds and Seasons,' to reflect on the identities of each of the circuit churches and how to support each church in meeting its full potential. This theme was brought back to the Circuit Meeting and has guided us in our work for next year.

Circuit Vision remains the starting point for how we work as a circuit.

### **2. Prayer and Worship**

- ♦ We continue to support our Preachers, Worship Leaders and those in training through quarterly meetings and provision of resources.
- ♦ We took part in Bible Month for 2024 and provided a training day for all local preachers to assist in their preparation.
- ♦ Filling the circuit plan continues to be a challenge due to the number of Local Preachers and Supernumerary ministers who are no longer able to take appointments. During this year we instigated Local Worship, services led by the churches. This has led to an increase in the use of resources provided by the Methodist Church (e.g. Methodist Homes Association, All We Can). It has also led to an increase in different types of worship including Café Church, Fellowship Services, Favourite Hymns and Readings.
- ♦ We continued to offer daily online evening prayers and online Sunday Worship reaching those who are housebound as well as others around the country and across the world.
- ♦ We committed to hold one circuit service at the beginning of each quarter.
- ♦ We held our annual circuit service at Normanton Farm.
- ♦ Individual churches hold acts of worship supporting the needs of their community, examples include Messy Church, a Dementia Church, outdoor services, remembering services, Ash Wednesday and Holy Week services and community carol services.

## **Annual Trustees Report**

The Circuit Leadership Team did commit to spending time in prayer and reflection at their monthly meetings as well as time on the governance requirements for the circuit. This has not yet been fully implemented and will be a focus for the next year.

### **3. Discernment and Calling**

- ♦ We seek to be a circuit which provides additional support for churches and individuals as they consider their calling. We are aware that this is something we need to develop further but during the reporting year the following took place:
- ♦ A speaker attended the Local Preachers and Worship Leaders meeting to talk about changes in the training programme for worship leaders and local preachers.
- ♦ 2 members of the circuit were elected by the District Synod to be representatives at the Methodist Conference.
- ♦ A circuit service was held on 3rd December to celebrate our local preachers, and several certificates were given in recognition of long service in the role.
- ♦ Our Circuit Safeguarding Officer is working with the circuit and the church safeguarding officers to create role descriptions for every role in the church. This will aid people in making informed decisions when exploring their calling.

### **4. Service and caring**

We celebrate the various ways in which our churches serve their communities through:

- ♦ Pastoral visiting
- ♦ Support for Ukrainian refugees including offering meeting places, providing homes and assistance with paperwork and forms
- ♦ Providing a location for a village post office
- ♦ Coffee Mornings
- ♦ Providing lunches
- ♦ Supporting foodbanks
- ♦ Toddler groups
- ♦ Work amongst young people
- ♦ Fellowship Groups
- ♦ Supporting the work of uniformed organisations
- ♦ Supporting an Alcoholics Anonymous group
- ♦ Generosity in hiring buildings out
- ♦ 'Open the book' programmes in schools
- ♦ Partnerships with other organisations e.g. Second Helpings in Stamford
- ♦ Choirs
- ♦ Warm Spaces
- ♦ And many others.

## Annual Trustees Report

The Circuit has actively supported an asylum seeker who is a member of one of our churches. Members have attended the Immigration Reporting Centre, conducted a letter writing campaign, raised money for legal fees, provided opportunities for the individual to tell their story and held an all-night prayer vigil.

The Circuit Meeting chose Water Aid as the circuit charity for the reporting year.

### 5. Communication

- ♦ We currently:
- ♦ Have weekly staff meetings
- ♦ Have regular meetings with church treasurers and safeguarding officers.
- ♦ Have a website which is regularly updated
- ♦ Have an active social media presence
- ♦ Assign a circuit steward to each church council
- ♦ Circulate notices / information via senior church stewards

We aim to:

- ♦ Continue to improve our communication with churches
- ♦ Provide resources for Worship where we can
- ♦ Meet regularly with property stewards
- ♦ Dedicate some Circuit Leadership Team Meetings to focus on individual churches, giving those churches an opportunity to send questions and requests for prayer or help to the meeting.
- ♦ Support local churches in their mission and ministry

### 6. Resources

#### Staffing

Exploring our Circuit Vision throughout the year, the Circuit Meeting took the decision that cuts had to be made before new growth could begin. We explored this under the title “What makes a Healthy Circuit?” As well as discussing this in Circuit Meetings, we held an open meeting for anyone from any of the churches to attend and to be part of the discussions.

It was recognised that all of the circuit churches were valuable centres of mission each with their own strengths which clearly benefitted their communities. Where we could make changes was in staffing.

- ♦ Rev’d Ruth Charlesworth curtailed her appointment to the circuit; leaving in August 2024.
- ♦ Rev’d Bekkie Wright was due to enter the stationing process in September 2024 thereby leaving the circuit in August 2025. During the reporting year, Bekkie expressed a desire to extend her appointment, and this was explored by the Circuit Invitation Committee. The decision was that Bekkie’s appointment would be extended by 3 years.

## **Annual Trustees Report**

- ♦ A supernumerary minister who was supporting the work of the circuit re-entered
- ♦ the stationing process during the year and left the circuit in August 2024.
- ♦ A student minister in the circuit also left in August 2024 to take up a probationer appointment in another circuit.
- ♦ We agreed that two Lay Worker roles would be created one for Pastoral and Discipleship and another for Discipleship and Evangelism. These would replace the existing Lay Worker roles from September 2024. During the reporting year the role descriptions were agreed along with how the new staffing team would work.

### **Office Holding Roles**

- ♦ A new Circuit Meeting Secretary was appointed after a vacancy of some time.
- ♦ The funded position for our Online and Social Media Support also came to an end, but the role-holder offered to continue the work on a voluntary basis.

## **7. Legal / Church Requirements**

### **Safeguarding**

- ♦ A number of Creating Safer Space Foundation module training courses have been held around the Circuit. Rev'd Andrew Hollins and the Circuit Safeguarding Officer have trained to lead the course.
- ♦ Our Circuit Safeguarding Officer has been instrumental in ensuring access for those who require the CSS Advanced module training. This included offering our circuit as a location for the training.
- ♦ Safeguarding audits were undertaken in all 9 circuit churches and for the circuit itself. The circuit audit has been reviewed on 3 occasions during the year.
- ♦ We use the safeguarding procedures well across the circuit, and ask for advice from the District Safeguarding Officer when needed.
- ♦ We review the Circuit Safeguarding Policy annually
- ♦ We maintain a database of all safeguarding requirements
- ♦ The Circuit Safeguarding Officer meets with the church safeguarding officers several times a year.

### **EDI**

- ♦ During the year we were one of the circuits chosen to be on the Discrimination and Abuse Response Scheme (DARS) pilot.
- ♦ Rev'd Andrew Hollins and Rev'd Bekkie Wright led three EDI training courses around the circuit.
- ♦ Rev'd Bekkie Wright is a representative on the District EDI Committee and the Connexional JDS Committee.



# Annual Trustees Report

## GDPR

We continue to help churches with GDPR. A training session was held on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024. Rev'd Bekkie Wright also met with individual churches to help them complete their returns.

In the next year we intend to develop our work in this area, ensuring there is a Data Champion in each Church and that the Data-Mapping is completed for the churches and the circuit.

## Property

With the change in staffing due to take effect in September 2024 the Circuit Meeting made decisions on the best locations for the ministers to live and how to ensure that the manses gave the best financial returns for the circuit. The legal and practical work was undertaken to prepare one manse for letting.

## Finances

- ♦ During the year we worked with TMCP to identify the uses for restricted funds. The Circuit Meeting agreed to apply to derestrict some of the funds, with the commitment to use them carefully and well.
- ♦ We have kept a watchful eye on balances and sought to transfer funds from reserves as and when needed using the correct mandates.
- ♦ We held two meetings with church treasurers which have been very well received.
- ♦ We have increased our circuit lay staff salaries in line with the connexional agreed increase for ministerial stipends.

Our financial statements accounts and reserves policy are attached on pages 17 to 21 of this report.

We are aware that we have been running at a significant deficit for a number of years, but over the past few years have focussed on decreasing that deficit with the aim of having a break even balance on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2026. The changes we have made over the reported year have set us in good stead to meet that aim.

# Please PRAY for:

## ***Bourne***

As we look forward to our Harvest Festival we thank you Lord for **all** the good gifts you have given us particularly our food. Whilst we have plenty we must not forget those who have little or nothing to eat.

We pray for all those starting new beginnings in education excitedly looking forward to their first day at school whether it be primary, secondary, or even university. We pray for our ministers and local preachers may they feel refreshed after their summer break also for those in our congregation who still feel weary and heavy laden with the burdens of everyday life.

## ***Deepings***

Pray for the restart of Messy Church and Lunchbox after the summer break

Prayers for those who have lost loved ones over the summer

## ***Empingham***

We give thanks for the opportunity of starting a monthly lunch club and continue our Monday social afternoon that had built up with the weekly Post Office. Please pray for this new outreach.

Pray for those who are struggling with health issues.

We give thanks for the summer holidays and times of refreshment, and pray for children & families as they go back to school, especially those going into new schools.

## ***Ketton***

We thank you Lord for a summer of sun, holidays and refreshment. But like the changing of the seasons we acknowledge the difficulties of so many friends who are struggling as their own health deteriorates and we pray for them.

We pray Lord for strength and energy to continue your ministry here in our small village but especially that we may be bold and reach out for new people to share the Gospel of your love.

We pray for situations across the world where there is war and famine and for all in authority to work tirelessly for peace.

Amen

## ***Oakham***

At the start of a new Methodist year we give thanks for our Ministers, glad to see Andrew back, and thankful for Bekkie, Phil, and Paul in their support and oversight. We give thanks too for all those who led very thoughtful worship at both morning and Easy Access services.

We are mindful of the need for willing people to step up to roles of responsibility within our church. We pray that we all will play whatever part we are able.

We pray that our various groups will continue to be an open door to allow people in our community to come in and experience the love of Jesus through the care of those here.

We pray for our ecumenical links with our fellow Christians in Oakham, and pray for continued support for the weekly ecumenical prayers, rotating around the churches.



# Please PRAY for:

## *Ryhall*

We praise God for the work he has inspired us to take on at Ryhall and the fruits which are being harvested as a result. For the passion and zeal for social justice placed on our hearts, which has led to us spearheading the successful campaign to keep the local library open. We praise God as our neighbours in the village talk with us of our God of justice because of that campaign and our involvement with the needs of the village.

We thank God for our children and families, for the joy in our holiday club and for the love and acceptance families have found there. For the voice of prophecy in our own children, some of whom have become church members as they “want to learn more about Jesus and help the church tell people about God.”

We thank God for our faithful congregation and those who lead them; who find strength and confidence in the fellowship of our gathering and the knowledge that God is with us.

**PRAISE OUR GOD OF JUSTICE AND HOPE!**

## *Stamford*

Lord walk with us as we begin afresh after the holidays.

We give thanks for the summer time, for the sunshine and times of rest.

Help us to come together with new insights and renewed energy in whatever we do. Bless our minister Andrew as he returns to his work after his sabbatical. We give thanks for Corinna and Bekkie for their work of the past few months. We pray for all beginning new situations, at school, college or work and for those starting retirement. Help them to adapt and enjoy the challenges and forge new friendships.

We pray for all known to us who are ill or grieving the loss of a loved one. We ask You will be with each one, through Your comforting and healing Spirit. Help us to know Your presence in everything we do, guiding us to do Your will in every situation.

## *Thurlby*

Lord we, pray for Andrew as he returns from his sabbatical, we pray that he is rested and ready to take up his responsibilities once again. We pray for Bekkie after her time as sole minister in his absence, also for Phil and Paul who assisted her. We pray for our circuit - that we will grow and spread your Name throughout the district. amen

## *Uppingham*

We would love you all to pray for Olive, please for good news about her future in the UK, and for her family, especially mum. For the community in Uppingham and those who live in the surrounding villages and the new Call Connect bus services that require forward planning and can be very confusing to use - especially for elderly people who no longer drive and attend some of the regular things on weekdays. Please pray that this doesn't isolate people. Pray for all the churches and for those who are experiencing change in their lives -help them to see new things in the seasons they find themselves in







YOU ARE WARMLY  
INVITED!

Join us for the  
**Commissioning Service**  
of




**Olive Ruvimbo Ruzvidzo**

as Co-Chair of Methodist Women in Britain


Sunday, 21st September 2025 | 3:00 PM  
at Barnhill Methodist Church, Stamford

We are honoured to have  
**Reverend Charity Tozivepi Nzegwu**  
preaching on the theme:

*‘Woven Together: Threads of Faith, Hope and Love’*



A light lunch and refreshments  
will be served from 1:30  
PM before the service.



Come and share in this  
special occasion!