



Chester le Street Methodist Circuit Newsletter

The **Methodist Church** 

Mar / Apr 2017

Issue 8



*Birtley
Chester le Street
Great Lumley
Pelton
Perkinsville
West Pelton*

It is almost a cliché to say that church is not a building, it is people. But when we think of church as people, we often have the meeting within a church building mainly in mind. For many people, church is what happens on Sunday. Centuries of church practice have made it difficult to imagine church as anything other than a weekly worship gathering. We 'go to church' because we think of church as a meeting. Church is seen as something we 'do' rather than something we are supposed to 'be'.

Unfortunately, this way of thinking about church has some drawbacks. It means that opportunities for inviting people to experience church are limited to just one or two hours a week, and it puts pressure on our worship as the only method for helping people learn about God and what it means to be a Christian. Much of our energy is spent on planning and organising services, often at the expense of spending time with those people who will never come through our doors in the first place. Seeing church as an 'event' has also meant that as Sundays have become busier, churches have become increasingly anxious about the 'competition' from other activities which may prevent people from attending, since we have pinned all hope of church growth on that weekly meeting.

Sadly, this way of understanding church has also seen the majority of our churches experience sharp decline, but the good news is that this is not the only

way to understand church, and in fact it is not the way church is understood in the Bible.

The model of church we see in the Bible is focused on 'being' church. In Acts 2, we see that church is not an event which people attend, but a way of life which people are invited to experience. The focus is not on a single weekly meeting, but on relationships and community. People were not invited to a location to "do church", but instead were invited to be *among* the church (*that is the people*)

'Being' versus 'Doing'

in order for them to see an alternative to the world they live in. People gathered together throughout the week to share stories, read scripture, hear teaching, or simply spend time with each other and this was 'church'.

This model of church creates many more opportunities to invite others, and reminds us that church is not only about worship, but also about mission, acts of service, and encouraging one another in our pursuit of growing closer to Jesus. It is this understanding of church as something we *are*, rather than something we *do* or *go to*, which fuelled the growth of the church in Acts, and also the growth of the Methodist Church in its early days.

This Lent, let me invite you to reconsider your understanding of church, and to see the possibilities and opportunities before us in a church that breaks free of the limits we have placed upon it and instead becomes a way of life we are invited to pursue.

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Circuit Diary

Thursday, 30 March @9.30am

Pelton Methodist Church are holding a Book Sale

Saturday, 8 April – 10am-noon

Flower Festival, held by the Junior Church of Birtley Methodist Church

Wednesday, 12 April @1.00pm

Easter Meditation at West Pelton Methodist Church

Maunder Thursday

13 April, 7.00pm
@Chester le Street Methodist Church

Monday, 24 April @7.00pm

Pie & Pea Evening at Birtley Methodist Church. Contact church for more details.

Good Friday Services

- 10.00am West Pelton MC
- 10.30am Birtley MC
- 11.45am Open Air Service
Great Lumley
- 2.00pm Great Lumley MC
- 3.00pm Pelton MC
- 3.00pm Chester-le-Street MC

WoW Meetings

held at Great Lumley Methodist Church at 7.30pm

- | | |
|----------------|--------------|
| 20 March | 17 July |
| 17 April (tbc) | 18 September |
| 15 May | 16 October |
| 19 June | 20 November |
| | 18 December |

re:new



Sunday Evenings

5.00 pm, Costa Coffee, Chester-le-Street

renewcls@zoho.com www.renewcls.com

District News and Events

Great 50 Days

You may remember last year the booklet called **Great 50 Days** that was distributed around the Circuit. This has been produced again this year. **Great 50 Days** runs from Easter Day to Pentecost and the resources will feature daily reflections each written by one of 50 different people around the Region plus there will be stories and weekly small group suggestions.

This year our Circuit will be using these resources to inform another Themed Preaching series. Further information on the series will be available soon.

MWiB District Day

**Tuesday 4th April 2017 at
Wesley Memorial Church, Low Fell**

10am – 3.30pm

Come and go as you wish

**Bring your own sandwiches
Tea & Coffee Provided**

**Short talks on the work of MWiB and the
District Overseas Project for 2016-17. In
the afternoon - workshops concluding with
a short act of worship.**



**Methodist Women
in Britain**

Chester Le Street Methodist Circuit

ROCK SOLID



MISSION YOUTH PARTNERSHIP



Three peaks Pilgrimage walk
Hastings Hill, Penshaw & Warden Law.
Saturday 29th April 2017 at 9.30am. Starting Middle Herrington Methodist Church.
Please bring a packed lunch at plenty of water
To raise funds for summer mission trip

A circuit youth group for all who are Year 6 to Year 12
At Great Lumley Methodist Church
On 1st and 3rd Saturday Night of each month 7.00pm - 8.30pm
Everyone welcome, Parental consent required.

Summer Trip to Northumbria

Again this year we are organising a summer mission Trip to the Seahouses area.

The trip will be from 20th August - 27th August 2017

Anyone over the age of 12 years will be welcome to join us
Please complete the interest form attached and return asap.

Further details will be circulated in late March.



Volunteers Required

The circuit Rock Solid youth group is now well established on the 1st and 3rd Saturday night of each month, following the Youth for Christ rock solid program, which has proven to be extremely popular.

We require extra volunteers to help with this.

No one is ever too old to get involved. It will be good fun.

There will be no preparation involved and all the materials will be provided.

If you feel you could give one Saturday night every two months please get in touch and be part of this developing opportunity.

For further information contact Ken Williamson on ken08011960@gmail.com

Have you considered becoming a circuit steward?

One of the important roles in the life of our circuit is that of circuit steward, and we are currently looking to recruit up to 3 additional people.

Circuit stewards are part of the leadership team of the circuit, and work in partnership with the ministers to support local churches in facing the challenges of being the church in the 21st century.

The role involves meeting together as a circuit leadership team, usually about every 6-8 weeks, and having oversight of the mission and ministry of the circuit, including its priorities, its finances, and its properties. Circuit stewards are responsible for arranging the care and upkeep of our manses and for the pastoral care of our ministers. Stewards are expected to attend Circuit Meeting, and may also be invited to attend some church councils and our District Synod.

Circuit stewards need to be members of a circuit church and should have a strong commitment to the Christian faith, as well as the ability to lead and to work as part of a team. More information is available on the Methodist Church Website, and some training is also provided.

If you feel God might be calling you to this role, or you would like to know more, please contact Rev Ian Kent.

THEME FOR 2017

INFUSED
JESUS IN THE BLOOD STREAM

www.ecgevent.org.uk

In April 2017, ECG Conference will convene in Scarborough with the theme 'Infused: Jesus in the Bloodstream'. There are already people from our Circuit going, so come and join them. Details of how to book are available on the website www.ecgevent.org.uk.

Forgotten to pick up a copy of the Preaching Plan? Want to receive our Newsletter electronically

Check out

www.clsmethodistcircuit.org.uk

on PC, Mac or Smartphone to view & download a copy of our latest Preaching Plan and to read the latest Newsletter online.

NEW FOR 2017

Would you like to receive our Preaching Plan by email?

Contact Laura on

clsadmin@webwhistle.co.uk

to be added to the mailing list