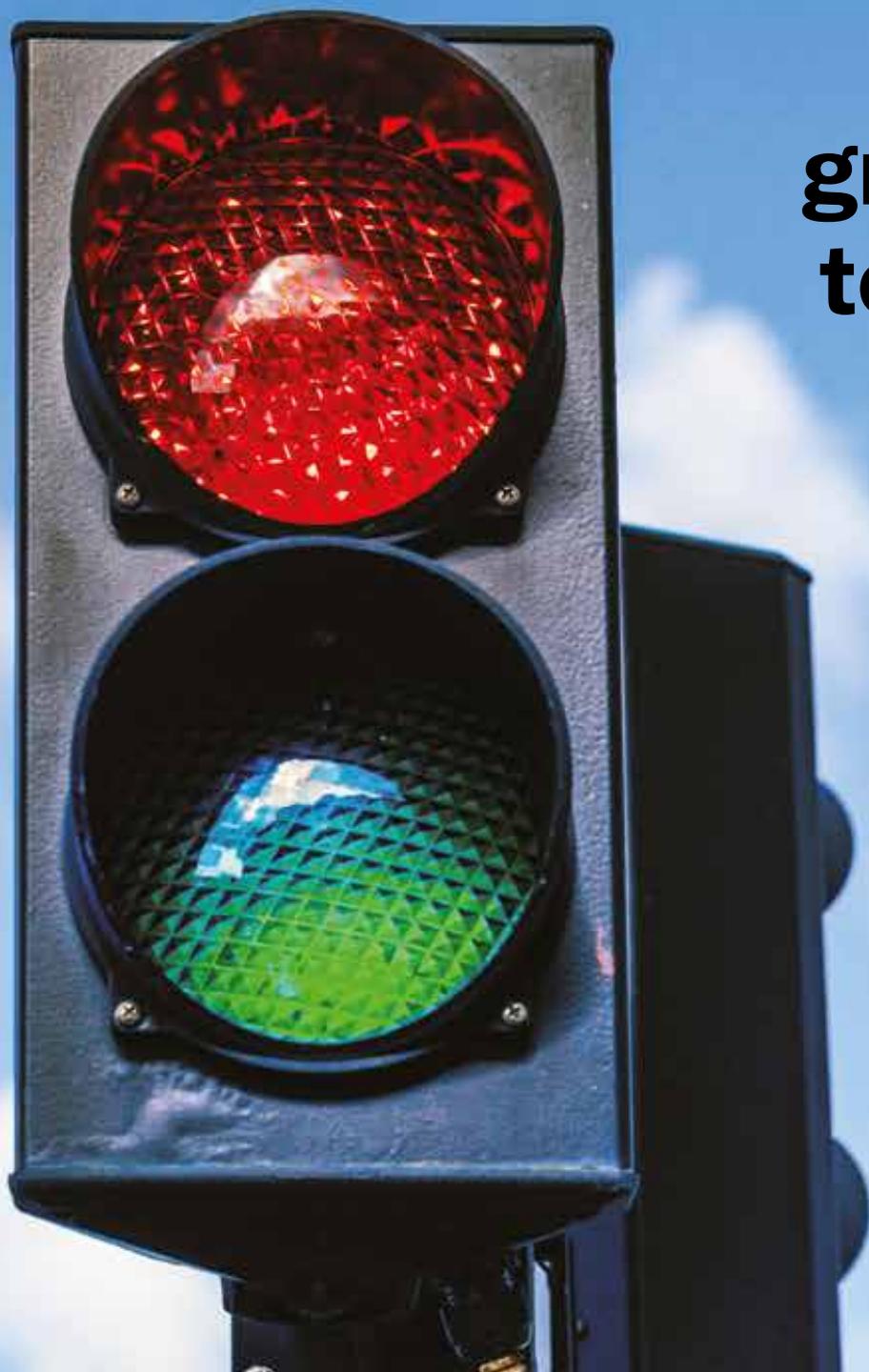


the  
**connexion**

---



**Giving a  
green light  
to mission**

Committed to  
community

---

Following a  
holy hunch

---

Contagious  
courage of  
young people

# Giving a green light to mission

David Perry  
Editor

**A**ny photographer will tell you that the way you frame shots in the viewfinder of your camera, or on your smartphone's screen, plays a large part in determining your characteristic visual style. What you choose to photograph and how you see those subjects says much about your passion and imagination too. The same is true of the Church and how we choose to see ourselves.

So let's be honest: for too long the images of Methodism that the world has focused upon have been pretty dismal and unattractive. A story of decline and dwindling numbers has become pervasive, and is taken to be the dominant truth about who we are today. Look closely, however, and you can really see something altogether different. This edition of *the connexion* reframes the narrative with pictures of our Church that are remarkably inspiring and hopeful.

As a circuit superintendent myself, I know that this is possible because mission is changing Methodism. We are taking risks, stepping out in faith and trusting God with a renewed sense of purpose and conviction. Amid the chapel closures, falling attendances and struggles to keep going, the Holy Spirit is inspiring myriad fresh ventures that are truly eye-catching. Right across the Connexion we are giving the green light to re-engaging with our communities and seeing ourselves differently in the process.

As you will see, what is emerging looks remarkably like images of early Methodism. People filled with faith, passion and imagination are being Spirit-led. As confident and courageous disciples of Jesus, holy hunches are followed, new opportunities grasped, strategies and priorities changed. God is reforming us – so let's start to reframe our self-understanding too.

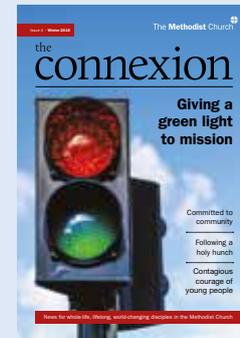
Love and peace,  
David

If you have been given this copy but would like to receive three copies that you can share, please sign up at [www.methodist.org.uk/theconnexion](http://www.methodist.org.uk/theconnexion). And if you have comments about the stories you have read in this issue, please get in touch at [theconnexioneditor@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:theconnexioneditor@methodistchurch.org.uk).

the  
**connexion**

Issue 4 • Winter 2016

is designed and produced by Methodist Publishing on behalf of the Methodist Church in Britain © Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes (TMCP) 2016  
Registered charity no 1132208



## Cover picture

Traffic lights at the entrance to the Royal Liver Building car park, Liverpool

## Photo credits

Front cover © David Perry  
Page 2 © Mark Kensett  
Page 4 and 5 © Stephen Lake  
Page 6 © Anna Sharp and Community Education Connection Ltd (the circuits education charity) and Christopher Furlong/Getty Images News/Thinkstock  
Page 7 © Mark Kensett, Elaine Watkinson and David Perry  
Pages 8 and 9 © Jennie Hurd and Pete Harris  
Page 10 © SheppeyFM  
Page 11 © Naomi Bidmead  
Page 12 © Anthony Clowes  
Page 13 © Laura Davies  
Page 14 © Sharon Lawrance  
Page 15 © David Perry  
Page 16 © Mark Kensett  
Page 17 © Francesco Piobbichi  
Page 18 © Mandy Hardwick  
Page 19 © Revd Jonny Gios and Sally Conroy  
Page 20 © Cliff College  
Page 21 © Mark Kensett  
Page 22 © Dr Peter Smith and the Revd Dr Liz Smith

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher, Methodist Publishing.

## Methodist Publishing

25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR

Tel: 020 7486 5502

Email: [resources@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:resources@methodistchurch.org.uk)

Web: [www.methodistpublishing.org.uk](http://www.methodistpublishing.org.uk)

## For more information

about the Methodist Church and its work throughout the world, visit: [www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk)

Information contained in this magazine was correct at the time of going to press. Views expressed in the articles may not be the official position of the Methodist Church in Britain.

# Highlights



**4** Radical hospitality



**7** Risk-takers



**11** Small chapel: huge vision



**14** When the church closed, the gospel went mobile



**19** Church committed to its community



**21** Forming mission-oriented ministers

## “Child, get up!”

**T**his year's Easter Offering dedication service takes its theme from the Gospel story of Jesus healing Jairus' daughter, in Luke 8:49-56. Once again, the service is organised by Methodist Women in Britain (MWiB).

Previously, the Easter Offering service has featured stories from several different countries. This year, however, all the stories are from India, and focus on work the Church of North India and Dalit Solidarity Network are doing among Dalit people. In 2011, MWiB launched a five-year campaign of solidarity with the Dalits. This Easter Offering service marks its culmination.

To order your resources for the 2016 Easter Offering service, go to: [www.methodistpublishing.org.uk](http://www.methodistpublishing.org.uk)

## Asbury 200th Anniversary Connexional Launch Event 9 April 2016

**T**his year marks the bicentenary of the death of Bishop Francis Asbury, the first Joint Superintendent Methodist minister in America.

Born in Staffordshire and raised in West Bromwich, Asbury was a Black Country boy through and through. The Connexion is celebrating his life and ministry with a special commemoration event on Saturday 9 April 2016, in partnership with the Black Country Living Museum, Dudley. With the Methodist President and Vice-President, we invite you to join us for:

- Commemoration Service in the former New Connexion Providence Chapel

- Victorian Sunday School experience – be on your best behaviour!
- Vintage bus trips to visit Francis Asbury's childhood cottage
- Nail and chain-making in the forge – see the sparks fly!
- Exhibition
- Talks
- 'Flash mob' costumed choir street entertainment and refreshments
- Fun for all the family!

For more information, and updates on plans for 9 April 2016 and how you can get involved, visit: [www.methodistheritage.org.uk](http://www.methodistheritage.org.uk) #asbury200 • [www.bclm.co.uk](http://www.bclm.co.uk)

*“Tough questions and a willingness to sacrifice and risk resources provoked fresh thinking.”*

# Radical hospitality

**After leading three churches over three years in the St Neots and Huntingdon Circuit, why does the Revd Matt Finch now have just one church to focus on, one church to lead and one town to work in?**



**F**irst, the bad news... it starts with risk. Lots of risk. Uncomfortable, upsetting, cold hard risk.

The good news is... the Good News! Out in the world, touching lives. People who would never come near our church (but for a fleeting baptism visit, or in tears at a funeral), are hearing and responding to Jesus.

And the really great news is... that the bit in between the bad news and the good news is full of coffee and newspapers, friends and worship. Welcome to Café Church!

But let's start with that risk.

## **Risking resources**

Risk for the sake of risk? No. Risk for the sake of life? Yes.

There were good signs that my ministry was growing in St Ives: new faces at church; plenty of opportunities; a will amongst some of the congregation to work towards something new. But nothing more could develop simply because of time. There was not enough time to develop new things and maintain three churches.

A point was reached where the choice became clear – change the workload and allow growth, or maintain the norm and miss the opportunity.

There was a painful discussion. Other ministers in the circuit would have to make sacrifices. Tough questions were raised: What is the circuit for? How do we best use its resources?

Debate was had. Of course all ministers would like more time. Who wouldn't?

*Above right:  
The Revd  
Matt Finch  
focusing on  
one church*

*Below: St Ives  
Methodist Church  
buzzes with life*



But the circuit pulled together with a narrative of sacrifice and thinking: “Perhaps one of us can have more time”. And this allowed time and space for creativity and growth.

### Hospitality at heart

So after risking resources and painful decisions what came next?

Radical hospitality became the heart of St Ives Methodist Church and the heart of the new work which developed.

Initially, growth came by investing in the communities that surrounded the church. Groups using our building, cafés, pubs in our area. It was as simple as saying “hello” and reaching out in real friendship to the people already around us.

Radical hospitality started with putting away the donation pot for tea and coffee after church – and ended with serving free tea, coffee, pastries, fruit, and juice to over 100 people every month at Café Church. It meant a monthly alternative service which we call *breathe* for around 10-20 people, which takes at least 10 hours of planning, preparation and set-up, to offer that moment of stillness and holy encounter.

Radical hospitality meant running a free *Nativity for Children* for 250 people on Christmas Eve, complete with straw bales, mulled fruit punch, mince pies, Christmas crafts and a small gift to take home. Really radical hospitality meant 20-30 people staying behind afterwards to try to get that ‘blooming’ straw off the carpet in time for Christmas morning!

These are our headlines, and under them are a hundred “hellos”, a thousand cups of tea, a renovated baby-change and disabled toilet that is now warm and welcoming. Radical hospitality is also a pile of jam scones and a band playing on the riverside in the summer, all free of charge.

Radical hospitality meant stopping passing round the collection plate and trusting that the people of God will give and fund this generous living. And they did. But more than financial donations, we’ve embraced a hospitality that hurts at St Ives Methodist Church. Many of us have given up our understanding of what church ‘should be’ so the newcomer might feel they can belong. People finding faith, or beginning to think more deeply about faith, are at the heart of our work.

In this Good News journey we’ve found church, and church again:



Left: Coffee (and tea, pastries and newspapers) create great news!



Bottom left: Candles and crafts are on the tables at St Ives Methodist Café Church

- There are places of encounter with God, where God transforms and changes people’s lives.
- A team has grown around what I do to carry the work forward. The gift of time in the allocation of one church allowed time to be invested in local leadership.
- Prayer has been key in every aspect.
- Rites of passage are plentiful and meaningful. 2014 saw our first Café Church wedding.
- Communion remains at the heart of our community.

And, of course, the true sign of our authenticity as a church is that we fail, we make mistakes, and we try to learn and grow as we pick up the pieces. As long as we all keep doing this, I think we’ll have a future.

**Find out more about St Ives Methodist Church by visiting [www.simc.co.uk](http://www.simc.co.uk) or email [matt.finch@simc.co.uk](mailto:matt.finch@simc.co.uk).**

Below: Willing congregation members set up and clear away Café Church





# Reaching Rotherham

**The Revd Alistair Sharp reflects on ‘new church’ activities bringing growth across the Rotherham & Dearne Valley Circuit.**

*Top: Rotherham steelworks*

*Inset: The Revd Alistair Sharp, Superintendent, Rotherham & Dearne Valley Circuit*

*Below: Church-based community centre café*



**S**teel industry decline, child sexual abuse, interracial violence, and monthly hate marches in the town centre – the worst of reasons for Rotherham making the news recently. On top of this, as Methodists we face today’s normal church issues. So we knew we needed to think radically about our future as an institution. Small changes were clearly no longer enough.

We have committed therefore, that each congregation will have a real ‘pastor’. One who actively believes in visiting and caring. To fulfil this we have employed a lay-worker, or supernumerary, rather than a minister. Our remaining three ministers are now enabled to make mission their key priority.

The Circuit is now encouraging and financially supporting fresh, town-wide mission initiatives. We are seeing some remarkable growth.

Our five RE Teams provide support to local schools through assemblies, lessons, and visits to the four Godly Play classrooms in our churches. Our 50 volunteers and one part-time staff member will soon be providing such services to a quarter of all primary and senior schools in the borough.

Benefitting their localities, four of our church buildings are transformed into highly effective community centres. One provides a base for eight foreign-language Christian congregations. And then there are the lettings of our buildings – for which income

has significantly increased requiring us to recruit more skilled administrative staff.

Beyond our buildings, the Methodist lead in Lighthouse Homes, a 51-bed project across eight centres for homeless men and women, has been highly effective.

Steady growth over ten years has resulted in new staff, new volunteers, new finances, and new Christians. We see new life every month here and as well as three weekly worship services, there are regular Bible studies, daily devotions and true discipleship of staff, volunteers and residents alike.

The connexional Chaplaincy Everywhere initiative inspired us to find, train and commission three lay chaplains to work in Rotherham town centre, a local school, and a community hospital. Two more will be commissioned this year. This sparks up new enthusiasm, new mission and new hope.

Although this work rarely turns into visitors to Sunday services, ‘church’ is increasingly happening in schools, streets and hostels.

The last ten years saw minister numbers fall from nine to just three, but today overall staff numbers are much higher and mission and outreach has increased dramatically. Traditional church continues to decline (albeit much more slowly), but new church continues to grow.

Perhaps this story of Rotherham should make the news too.

# Risk-takers

## Taking the risk to join others

We began as two struggling circuits – Gainsborough and Market Rasen & Caistor – talking to one another, wary of one another. Eventually we took the risk and joined together.

“Is it working?” we’re often asked.

“Yes it is” is our reply.

We are getting used to travelling further; we like different preachers, we like meeting new people. Doing things differently isn’t as bad as we thought!

## Taking the risk to look outward

Looking beyond ourselves, opening our doors and welcoming people who are not necessarily like us can be a risky business. Working in partnership with others is not always a smooth ride.

Toddlers lunches and *Let’s Get Active* groups bring us into partnership with Gainsborough Children’s Centre and Home-Start.

*Singing from the Heart* works in residential homes in Gainsborough town.

## Taking the risk to get into the community

We began to believe we had something to offer children and young people who had no contact with Church. We took the risk to employ three outreach workers to work in Gainsborough and the villages. We took the risk of investing in a caravan to park on recreation grounds, pub and school car parks. We went into local schools and offered our services. The caravan is now a

meeting place for children and young people to socialise face-to-face, explore life and consider spiritual matters. In winter the local churches open their doors when it is too cold and dark for young people on the playing fields.

## So how has this risk-taking brought growth?

We have grown in confidence and courage. Traditional congregations accept and enjoy a more contemporary style of worship using worship groups, projecting words, learning new songs. They respond to the preaching and more people meet regularly for Bible study and prayer. There is a greater sense of having something worth sharing, and new-comers are adding to our number. Many have brought tremendous enthusiasm for their, sometimes newly discovered, faith. This brings hope and expectation to us all.

## And the outreach?

We began with nothing – so growth is obvious. Today, many children and young people with no connection to any church are hearing the good news of Jesus Christ.

Today, young people who had never been through the doors of a church now meet in chapels to socialise. We are sowing seeds, we are nurturing the fragile plants and praying that someone, somewhere will reap the harvest. But this is not all about results. It is about serving as we are called – to go into all the world and proclaim the good news. And that can be a risky business.



**Risk-takers – that’s what you might call Liz Childs and Elaine Watkinson and all the members of the recently formed Wolds & Trent Circuit.**

*“Looking beyond ourselves, opening our doors and welcoming people who are not necessarily like us can be a risky business.”*



Above: The Revd Liz Childs offers a welcome to Gainsborough Methodist Church

Far left: Elaine Watkinson offering advice on a tricky shot

Left: Mission goes mobile as the youth project caravan travels to where the young people gather

# A strategy for cherishing Cymru

The Revd Jennie Hurd tells how churches across Synod Cymru action a four-year mission plan using *Our Calling*.

**S**ynod Cymru, the Welsh-language district of the British Methodist Connexion, together with the English-language Wales Synod, forms the Methodist Church in Wales. Worship and service are supported in the two languages in cities, towns and villages across the nation.

Wales has about 570,000 Welsh speakers and Synod Cymru numbers some 1,300 members. Most of our 70 congregations are in the traditionally stronger Welsh-speaking areas of Mid and North Wales. Welsh-language Methodism, like Welsh-language Christianity, is a minority community. Nevertheless, since Thomas Coke first sent Welsh-speaking Wesleyan preachers to Wales in 1800, British Methodism has recognised and respected the right of Welsh speakers to learn and care, worship, serve and evangelise in their own language – and Cymru cherishes its place within the Connexion.

## Strategic focus

By the early twenty-first century it became increasingly difficult to find enough Welsh-speaking presbyters to serve as superintendents in the circuits of Cymru. For the worship, work and witness to continue, a bold strategic response was required.

A careful process of consultation within Cymru and the Connexion resulted in a single circuit of the same size and scope as the Synod, and requiring the appointment of a single superintendent. The circuit was divided into eleven areas, each with a minister or lay person as Area Leader, and also having a Circuit Administrator. This meant that Area Leaders could focus more on the life of the churches and their mission, as they released many of their administrative responsibilities.

## Mission

When Cymru needed a new synod chair to serve also as circuit superintendent in 2013, the role description placed a new emphasis

on encouraging and developing mission. In the spring of 2014, the Synod adopted a project titled *Datblygu Ein Galwad* (*Developing Our Calling*). The intention is to take a different theme of the Methodist Church's *Our Calling* each year, over a period of four years, and to develop it within the life of Synod Cymru. Churches and areas take part in whatever way is appropriate for them, with a number of new activities starting. One area now produces a regular newsletter; several areas held sessions based around the bilingual Advent resource *Byw Ben i Waered/Living Upside Down*; people are meeting for coffee mornings, fellowship and study groups and a number of churches are considering starting *Llan Llanast* (Messy Church). Synod Cymru supports the ecumenical chaplaincy team at the Royal Welsh Show in Llanellwedd/Builth Wells.

A devotional session for Advent 2015 was offered to the areas by the Chair, and taster sessions of the new Worship Leader and Local Preacher training course in its Welsh translation, *Addoli: Arwain a Phregethu*, are anticipated for 2016 – to inspire Welsh worship-leading skills further.

## Doing the little things

For Synod Cymru these small activities, and others like them, are fresh, significant and encouraging. One of the most important factors for any mission activity is context, and Cymru's *Datblygu Ein Galwad/Developing Our Calling* project is, above all, contextual. Churches and areas do what they can, not what they cannot, as appropriate to where and how they are. Wales' patron saint, Dewi Sant (Saint David), is reputed on his deathbed to have told his followers to "do the little things".

Wales is not a big country; Welsh-language Methodism is not a big player on the ecumenical scene. However, like salt, the "little things" can make a big difference when offered to God and, in the service of God's Kingdom, small-scale mission activities, like yeast, can bring growth.



Above: Synod Cymru minister the Revd Dr Ian Morris volunteers as a Coordinating Chaplain of the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show Chaplaincy Team



# Strategaeth ar gyfer coleddu Cymru

**Y Parch Jennie Hurd yn rhannu sut mae eglwysi ar draws Synod Cymru yn gweithredu cynllun cenhadol pedair blynedd gan ddefnyddio *Ein Galwad*.**

**M**ae Synod Cymru, y dalaith Gymraeg a berthyn i Gyfundeb Methodistiaidd Prydain, ynghyd â'r dalaith Saesneg Wales Synod, yn ffurfio'r Eglwys Fethodistaidd yng Nghymru. Caiff addoli a gwasanaeth eu cefnogi yn y ddwy iaith mewn dinasoedd, trefi a phentrefi ar draws y wlad.

Mae tua 570,000 o siaradwyr Cymraeg yng Nghymru ac mae gan Synod Cymru tua 1300 o aelodau. Lleolir y mwyafrif o'r deg a thrigain o gynulleidfaoedd Synod Cymru yng nghadarnleoedd traddodiadol Cymraeg Canolbarth a Gogledd Cymru. Mae Methodistaeth Cymraeg, fel y mae Cristnogaeth Cymraeg, yn gymuned leiafrifol. Serch hynny, ers i Thomas Coke anfon y pregethwyr Wesleiaidd Cymraeg i Gymru yn gyntaf ym 1800, mae Methodistaeth Prydain wedi cydnabod a pharchu hawl siaradwyr Cymraeg i ddysgu a gofalu, addoli, gwasanaethu ac efengylu yn eu hiaith eu hunain - ac mae Cymru'n trysori ei lle o fewn y Cyfundeb.

## Ffocws strategol

Erbyn dechrau'r unfed ganrif ar hugain daeth yn gynyddol anodd dod o hyd i ddigon o weinidogion Cymraeg eu hiaith i wasanaethu fel arolygwyr yng nghylchdeithiau Cymru. Roedd angen ymateb strategol mentrus, er mwyn sicrhau parhad yr addoli, y gwaith a'r dystiolaeth.

Yn dilyn proses gofalus o ymgynghori o fewn Cymru a'r Cyfundeb, crëwyd un gylchdaith, yn gydffiniol â maint a chwmpas y Synod, gyda'r angen am benodi un arolygwr yn unig. Rhannwyd y gylchdaith yn un ardal ar ddeg, pob un gyda gweinidog neu berson llewyg yn Arweinydd Ardal, a phenodwyd Gweinyddwr Cylchdaith. Canlyniad hyn oedd bod Arweinyddion Ardal yn gallu canolbwyntio mwy ar fywyd yr eglwysi a'u cenhadaeth, wrth gael eu rhyddhau o rhai dyletswyddau gweinyddol.

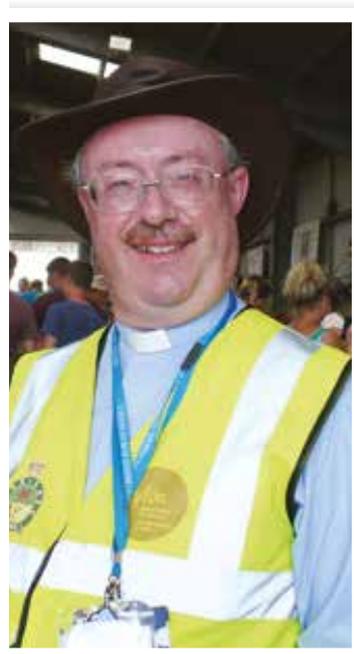
## Cenhadaeth

Wrth geisio cadeirydd synod newydd i

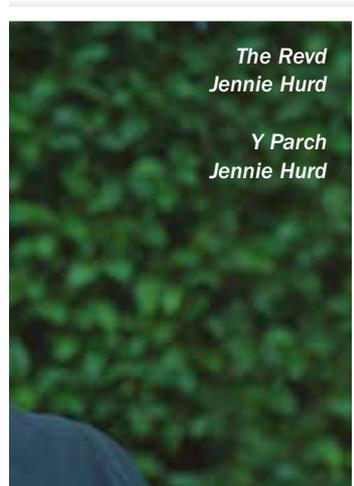
wasanaethu hefyd fel arolygwr cylchdaith yn 2013, rhoddodd y disgrifiad swydd bwyslais mawr ar annog a datblygu cenhadaeth. Yng ngwanwyn 2014, mabwysiadodd y Synod raglen yn dwyn yr enw *Datblygu Ein Galwad*. Y bwriad yw cymryd gwahanol thema o *Ein Galwad* yr Eglwys Fethodistaidd pob blwyddyn, am gyfnod o bedair blynedd, a'i datblygu o fewn bywyd Synod Cymru. Mae eglwysi ac ardaloedd yn cymryd rhan ym mha ffordd bynnag sy'n addas gyda nifer o fentrau newydd yn cychwyn: Mae un Ardal bellach yn cynhyrchu cylchlythyr rheolaidd; bu sawl Ardal yn cynnal sesiynau'n seiliedig ar yr adnodd Adfent dwyieithog *Byw Ben i Waered/Living Upside Down*. Mae pobl yn cyfarfod mewn boreau coffi, cyfarfodydd cymdeithas ac astudiaeth ac mae nifer o eglwysi yn ystyried cychwyn *Llan Llanast*. Mae Synod Cymru yn cefnogi'r tîm caplaniaeth ecwmenaidd yn Sioe Frenhinol Cymru yn Llanellwedd. Cynigwyd sesiwn defosiynol ar gyfer Adfent 2015 i'r Ardaloedd gan y Cadeirydd, a threfnir sesiynau blasu'r cyfieithiad Cymraeg o'r cwrs hyfforddi newydd i Arweinyddion Addoli a Phregethwyr Lleol, *Addoli: Arwain a Phregethu*, yn 2016 – i ysbrydoli ymhellach sgiliau arwain addoli.

## Gwneud y pethau bychain

I Synod Cymru, mae'r gweithgareddau bychain hyn, ac eraill tebyg iddynt, yn ffres, yn arwyddocaol ac yn galonogol. Un o'r ffactorau pwysicaf mewn unrhyw weithgaredd cenhadol yw cyd-destun, ac mae'r rhaglen *Datblygu Ein Galwad* yn anad dim yn gyd-destunol. Mae eglwysi ac ardaloedd yn gwneud yr hyn allant wneud, nid yr hyn na allant wneud, fel mae'n briodol i'w sefyllfa. Honnir i nawddsant Cymru, Dewi Sant, ddweud ar ei wely angau wrth ei ddilynwyr i "wneud y pethau bychain". Nid yw Cymru'n wlad fawr; nid yw Methodistaeth Cymraeg yn chwaraewr allweddol yn y byd ecwmenaidd. Er hynny, fel halen, gall y "pethau bychain" wneud gwahaniaeth mawr pan gyflwynir hwy i Dduw ac, mewn gwasanaeth i Deyrnas Dduw, gall gweithgareddau ar raddfa fechan, fel burum, arwain at dwf.



Uchod: Parch Ddr Ian Morris, gweinidog gyda Synod Cymru yn gwirfoddoli fel y Caplan Cydlynol Tîm Caplaniaeth Sioe Amaethyddol Frenhinol Cymru



The Revd Jennie Hurd

Y Parch Jennie Hurd

# Following a holy hunch

When Deacon Pru Cahill arrived on the Isle of Sheppey in 2013, her brief was to make links in the local community – only to discover connections far beyond the island.



**“I felt strongly the urge to push open the door of the community radio station.”**

*Above: Pru training at radio presentation*

*Below: The team at Sheppey FM*

**I**t happened during my first month in Sheerness, while out and about in town. I felt strongly the urge to push open the door of the community radio station, Sheppey FM, to find out what happens there. I introduced myself as Deacon Pru and was invited to “come and see!” Just two hours later I was signing up for presenter training, and within a month had a regular weekly show.

I began with no formal media experience, other than being an avid radio listener. The first couple of shows were pretty nerve-wracking, but I felt God telling me

to share the gospel and take a risk to pray on air.

My guests have come from across the churches, from people involved in various projects and organisations, musicians, and those in the public eye. Always the conversation includes the opportunity for the guest to share their journey of faith or respond to: “how-did-you-end-up-doing-what-you’re-doing?” It was a surprise to discover – live on air – that the organiser of Sheppey’s food bank had a background in Formula 1, and that the builder of a church project in Malawi was once a witch.

I invite guests to pray with me. In the summer of 2014, *Prayer-on-the-Air* became *Prayer-in-the-Square* when, under the clock tower, colleagues and I prayed with people in the town.

Station statistics and listener numbers are a closely-guarded secret (so as not to create unhealthy competition between presenters). But we do know that most of our listeners are overseas – not just off the island but across the Atlantic!

I feel that this ministry is as much with others at the station, as with the online audience. A significant moment came in January when a colleague died unexpectedly, aged 54. Chris, who hosted the *Soul Show*, was the presenter I handed over to each Wednesday evening. So when I was trusted with his funeral service, I knew I could speak with confidence. The family stressed that he wasn’t a “religious man”, but nevertheless wanted their prayers to be heard. Together we cried, laughed, remembered and played the music Chris loved.

In January 2016 I’ll be handing over my show to the Revd Jeanette McLaren, an Anglican colleague. It feels like the right time for someone else to take over and give the slot a new voice. Through the internet the world is our parish!





# Small chapel: huge vision

**Joining a Jersey festival with other island churches sparked God's vision in Naomi Bidmead for Bethesda Chapel.**

**I**s our faith compelling? By compelling, I mean do we evoke people's interest? Do we tell a story of powerful and irresistible love? Are we taking our belief in Christ's outrageous love out there?

Following our involvement in a local festival we were invited to go out and be there! When I say "there" I mean Jersey Live 2015, a two-day music and arts festival attracting around ten thousand people each day.

As a small, yet growing, rural Methodist church we knew this was an amazing opportunity to share the love of God in a relevant way. And what an amazing opportunity to invite churches around the island to work together – a double whammy in one big event.

We began by meeting together. In God's astounding and wonderful way fifteen representatives from eight island churches met, prayed, shared ideas and planned. We went away to rummage through our cupboards and prepare puppet shows, make dyed rice, silk dough and many other items for children's activities.

Arriving early on our first day, our team of twenty set out sensory play for 'tiddlers', based on both Bible and children's stories.

We quickly learnt that we needed to make sure all the play was outside, with our numerous picnic blankets ready to welcome tired bottoms in need of a rest. But it was our conversation that was our greatest tool and our greatest gift.

As people meandered around we talked, connected, laughed and encouraged. Although we had little children in mind when we were planning, older children, teenagers and adults stopped for a piece of the fun. As people played, we sat and played too. We began conversations and each was an opportunity. We gleaned a little of people's perception of Church and offered momentary reassurances; this play was special because it came with love, it was free and it was a space to rest and explore.

The church was out there this summer and I was privileged to be part of it. We came together to love people where they were at. We wanted to provide an offering, a gift of beautiful sensory play, but also we wanted to begin to build relationships and show love on Jesus' scale.

I want exactly this to be the amazing vision for my home church – a place to come just as we are, a place where we can be free, a place to rest and explore our exciting and compelling Saviour.

*Main picture: Elliott's rainbow rice tea party*

*Top: The tiger came to tea!*

*Above: Sue Noble of Open the Book and the Revd Tony Morling, minister of St Helier Methodist Centre, in full festival vibe*

***"I want exactly this to be the amazing vision for my home church – a place to come just as we are."***

# Daring to step into the future



Worship during  
We are Men 2015,  
at The Potter's  
House

## Founding pastor of The Potter's House, Phil Barber, shares with its current leader, Anthony Clowes, God's 28-year plans for growth and church planting in Stoke.

### Phil

It was just before Christmas 1987. I went with two friends to lead the Ipstones Methodist young people's weekend in the Peak District. When Carly, one of the young people, led the Saturday evening epilogue, the Lord gave me a direct call to plant a church. During that same evening, another young person, called Anthony Clowes, gave his life to Jesus. It is a source of wonder to me that nearly 28 years later I handed over the leadership of the church I planted to Anthony, now married to Carly.

It was some four years later, after careful training and preparation, that a team of 17 people, with their children, were sent out by Swan Bank Methodist Church. They planted into a school a few miles away on a housing estate near Stoke city centre. The church, today numbering about 600 adults and children, is called The Potter's House. It meets in a former school building, which we purchased in 2005, and turned into an independent charitable trust company called The Bridge Centre.

**“What a great time in history to be a part of the Methodist Church in our nation.”**

I'm often asked how we managed to do all this. The answer is: not in our own strength. But first, and foremost, because God asked us to do it, and he has always given us his *dunamis*, or power. Second, because we used intentional strategies to support the making of new disciples. These include team work, friendship evangelism, an emphasis on children and teens, relevant means of communication, sensitivity to those who have never been to church, a warm welcome with loving care, and regular preaching of the gospel.

In 2005 we deliberately reinvented church to make it more relevant to people today, changing our worship style and organisation. With the correct plan, any church can live, and grow, and reach out appropriately to its community.

### Anthony

What a great time in history to be a part of the Methodist Church in our nation.

I passionately believe that now is the time for us to focus our resources on



Welcome to the home of  
**the Potter's House**  
21st Century Church

Tel: 01782 683781  
[www.thepottershouse.eu](http://www.thepottershouse.eu)



*In front of The Potter's House, Anthony Clowes (left) and Phil Barber thank God for the past and for its future plans for continued growth*

leading people to Jesus – and introduce radical changes to ensure our church will be making new disciples for many years to come. At The Potter's House we thank God for the past; under Phil's inspirational leadership something quite extraordinary took place here in Stoke. However, we don't live in the past. Rather, we believe that the best is yet to come.

During the two years since my appointment as Lead Pastor at The Potter's House, I've travelled to some vibrant, growing churches across the UK. When I worshipped in these churches and met their staff, I had a key question in my mind, "why is this church growing?"

Certain characteristics are clear. Growing churches offer relevant, inspirational worship. Preaching connects Scripture with everyday life. These churches have a clear focus for helping every Christian to see that they are missionaries, commissioned by Jesus, to be "salt and light" wherever God has placed them.

In a large, multigenerational church it would be easy to be complacent, sit back and celebrate how blessed we are. At The Potter's House we work hard to avoid stagnation. In my experience, there is a danger that we often only start to talk about change when it is too late. To try to avoid this I regularly ask myself the following: did the new worshippers in our church today feel welcomed and did they leave having clearly heard the gospel? When people leave The Potter's House after

gathered worship are they better equipped to follow Jesus? Is our church helping people to live out their faith in their home, neighbourhood and place of work? How is our church making a difference in our local community through acts of love, kindness and compassion? If the answer to any of the questions is negative, then we're doing something wrong and it's time to re-think.

Next year, The Potter's House will plant a new congregation. We will invite approximately 100 of our members to build something new in an area of our city that has significant social challenges. As I write, there are still several 'unknowns'. Will enough people grasp this vision? What effect will this have on our existing congregation? Exactly how we will fund a project which, if we're hearing from God correctly, could cost millions?! However, this we do know: the most exciting place to be as Jesus-followers is on the edge, obedient to his call and trusting him for all that we need.

In the past, God has done amazing things through the Methodist Church in this nation and beyond. It's my conviction that if we dare step into the future with courage and attempt great things for God, then surely there are even better things to come!

[www.thepottershouse.eu](http://www.thepottershouse.eu)

***"Growing churches offer relevant, inspirational worship. Preaching connects Scripture with everyday life."***

*Potter's House pastor, Anthony Clowes, equips people to follow Jesus*





# When the church closed, the gospel went mobile

Money from the sale of a Calderdale closed chapel bought a bright yellow double-decker.

Above:  
Double-decker  
disciple-maker!

Below:  
Busoasis 'driver'  
Sharon Lawrance



***"Busoasis helps people pray by providing prayer spaces."***

**S**haron Lawrance is the Lead Worker for the Calderdale Methodist Circuit's Busoasis Project. With a professional background in highways, as a qualified counsellor, and being passionate about mission, Sharon is the perfect 'driver' on board Busoasis – a double-decker bus that's breaking down barriers between Church and communities in West Yorkshire.

"Busoasis has internet access, hot and cold water, four TVs with games consoles, as well as comfy seating areas! Its aim is to build relationships between the community of all ages and the Church by going 'into the field' to share God's love.

We connect with many partners around the area. A big aspect of our work is with the police and Youth for Christ (YFC), to try to address anti-social behaviour (ASB) issues in Halifax town centre.

During the initial eight-week period, we went down to the bus station and ran a youth drop-in on Busoasis. It only consisted of free drinks, toast and snacks, but while we were there, ASB dropped by 25 per cent. The YFC Detached Youth Workers continue to support the young people when Busoasis can't be there – some now attend a local church.

"We also work with Christian Initiative in Calderdale Schools, taking the bus to a secondary Academy where we regularly run an after-school club. We have worked with all ages from toddler groups, to the Alzheimer's Society, to the food bank in Halifax. Busoasis is also host to IT-awareness courses that we hold both on the bus and elsewhere. I now deliver beginners iPad courses that help many older people connect with family across the globe!

"Running alongside the Busoasis Project, at Illingworth Moor Church, we have Cafeoasis. We open a café once a week for two hours with someone on hand to offer help and support, if people need it. The proceeds from the café meant we could buy a couple of iPads to use on the bus and a new Xbox One.

"We now use Busoasis to help people to pray by providing prayer spaces on and off the bus in our local school."

**Contact Sharon on 07770 246734 or [staff.busoasis2013@gmail.com](mailto:staff.busoasis2013@gmail.com).**



Keep updated by visiting [www.busoasis.org.uk](http://www.busoasis.org.uk) or follow Busoasis at [facebook.com/busoasis](https://facebook.com/busoasis).

# Contagious courage of young people

Past President of the Conference the Revd Stephen Poxon explains the excitement experienced across the congregation of St Mark's, Tottenham.

**W**hat a privilege to share ministry in Tottenham and be part of a growing, energetic church. St Mark's is on the High Road and in such a strategic position, just across from where the 2011 riots began.

One of the growing areas within St Mark's is among our young adults. We are blessed with a large and growing number of teenagers through to people in their early thirties. They meet every Thursday night as a group to study the Bible together, which leads into singing rehearsals for the worship groups, David's Harp and JLG.

Young people are so quick to testify to all that God is doing in their lives. Recently, as I sat among them, five of the group gave testimony to the way they believed God had led them to new jobs. For some, it was after a difficult time of being out of work. For others, it was simply having the opportunity to move into new areas to use their skills more fully. They are never ashamed to share their faith and to give God the glory. They are courageous in the communities where they live and work.

Courageous: brave enough to be who God has called you to be was the theme of the youth weekend at the end of October. It was a wonderful experience of worship and evangelism.

The Friday night was full of praise songs and testimonies with young people from other churches coming to share their faith. A Saturday evening concert involved more singing, plenty of dancing, a humorous and topical drama, as well as testimonies about the way God continues to lead. Sunday morning saw the church more packed than usual with lots of younger people we didn't know visiting to support and be challenged by our own young people – who led two hours of worship.

The wonderful thing is that with our young people being so courageous, courage is contagious: the older members of St Mark's

Church and the children are excited too, Sunday morning congregations are growing, more people attend the mid-week Bible study and a new monthly prayer meeting, another young person received a note to preach, we hear such comments as "what a privilege to have so many young people among us", and it is. They are a blessing to us and our prayer is that we will be brave enough to be the Church God has called us to be!

*"St Mark's is on the High Road... just across from where the 2011 riots began."*



Stephen Poxon preaching during his presidential year 2009/2010, from Samuel Wesley's tomb at Epworth

# The church with no name and no members!

They  
Will Know  
We Are Christians  
By Our  
~~Doctrine~~  
Love



**Local opposition forced Cheshire South Circuit to rethink its building sale. The Revd Malcolm Lorimer explains what happened.**

**T**wo churches within a mile; a plan to sell one and renovate the other. Quite simple, until you realise one had a bowling club attached and there was a lot of local community opposition to selling it.

## Blue-sky thinking

An idea formed, thanks to recognising that both sites were fantastic locations.

We talked to a local housing association. They agreed, in exchange for building 18 apartments overlooking the bowling green, to build us a community/café church on the front of the site. The congregation moved

to the other church, which was completely renovated.

The circuit leadership team supported the idea, with the new facility reporting directly to them. Building work began.

This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for us to create a new form of church – vital if we are to grow a community of people interested in faith.

We will demonstrate our Christian faith in our values: welcoming and open to all, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, background, appearance or where we find ourselves in this journey we call life. Just as God himself came to us in the person of Jesus as a helpless baby, so he needed people to help him grow. Just as the early Christian church was known not for what its members believed, but how they loved and cared for each other and those around them.

## Church with no name

We are deliberately not giving the centre a name at this point. This is part of our commitment to genuine community ownership of the building and what takes place there.

We have a large meeting room that we can subdivide into three smaller rooms. We are listening to regular users of the coffee shop and the local community about what activities they want. We have good relationships with a number of partner agencies who can deliver information, advice and support, in response to community needs.

This new form of church is engaging people with faith and spirituality in today's world!



*Above: New church building with no name*

*Top right: Malcolm Lorimer in conversation in the coffee shop*

*Bottom right: New church life*

# Hope in Lampedusa: how Methodists are responding to the humanitarian crisis

**Lampedusa is a beautiful unspoiled Mediterranean island washed by a clear, brilliant sea. A paradise for holidays, a rich fishing ground, an ever varied seafood cuisine, it's also always been a landfall for travellers.**

**I**t was no surprise then, on 3 October 2013, that many islanders ran to the shore to save travellers shipwrecked on a boat coming from Libya. 368 people drowned; a few were saved.

Although Italian churches have been supporting and welcoming migrants for decades, this tragedy forced them to think what more they could do. The Protestant Federation, which includes Methodists, proposed a major programme – Mediterranean Hope (MH).

## Mediterranean Hope

They first established an *Observatory* on Lampedusa staffed by two young people to support everyone on the island, residents as well as newly arriving seafarers, and to monitor and publicise the challenges of this gateway to Europe. They find themselves increasingly challenging the militarisation of the 'reception' process and bringing human warmth into the encounter.

Next, a *House of Culture* was set up in Scicli, the home of a Methodist congregation which has lived out its faith in radical ways throughout the last century. This provides a welcoming home for vulnerable people, especially women with children and unaccompanied minors. They accommodate the residents and give educational and psychological support. In contrast to the

usual reception centres, it is also a meeting place for the town with cultural events, music, art, etc.

A *Resettlement Office* tracks and supports each person's pathway through the complicated systems and procedures; helping them find their route to an improved and more stable life in Italy or elsewhere in Europe.

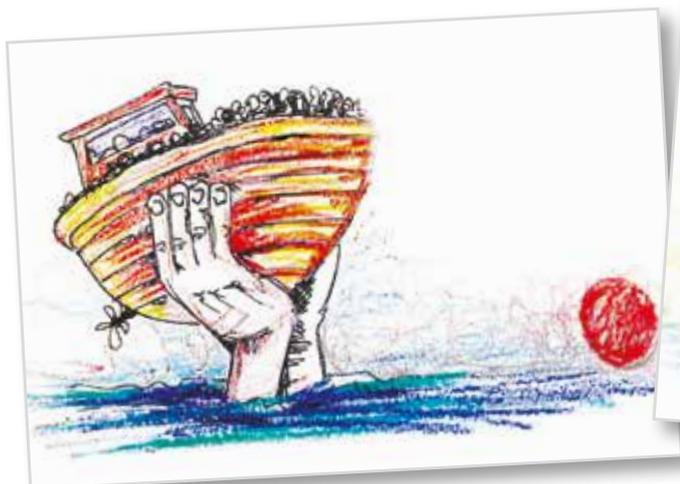
The fourth part of the project, perhaps its most innovative and political, seeks to create *Safe Corridors*. It is being developed carefully with the Catholic Community of Sant'Egidio and the Italian State. There will be MH offices in Morocco, Ethiopia and Lebanon to help vulnerable people obtain humanitarian visas so they can avoid the terrible sea crossing. (Eminent British judges and lawyers have called for just such visas). If it comes to pass, the UK will still be far behind Italy and its churches.

In October 2015 a small group of British Methodists travelled to Lampedusa to plan for British interns to help MH. While there, they joined a large multifaith congregation remembering those who died seeking safety in Europe. Powerfully, Eritrean survivors from 2013 were present wearing shirts proclaiming 'Protect people not borders'.

That so many faiths came together was a miracle enough. But Mediterranean Hope is in all its aspects a miraculous parable of Gospel

*Below: Paintings by Francesco Piobbichi, artist and resident of Lampedusa. Like most Lampedusans, Francesco refuses to take photographs of refugees. Instead, he paints the scenes unfolding on the island – giving a voice (and, indeed, hope) to those arriving on Mediterranean shores in search of refuge.*

**For more stories about Methodist life across the globe, go to: [www.methodist.org.uk/worldchurch](http://www.methodist.org.uk/worldchurch)**



# We are sure that the kingdom is happening!

**From redundant church to transformative presence. Andy Hardwick, of Rugby and Daventry Circuit, explains how Newbold became a growing, loving community.**

*Right: Newbold community sharing God's love*

*Below: Signs of a growing, loving community*

**“Was our mission to an area with lots of need finished?”**

**W**hat do we do when a church comes to the end of its life? Sometimes it is obvious: we close it down. But what if the circuit leadership team senses that the work God has called us to do in a particular community is not over?

That was the dilemma facing the Revd John Anderson eight years ago. The church, the Methodist Society, had gone, but was our mission to an area with lots of need finished? He felt not, and so conceived a circuit project, based on the imperative of service, as expressed in *Our Calling*.

## New beginnings

We started with a secular youth organisation running their work in our buildings for a few years. Later, there were various community groups and churches for whom English was not their first language using the buildings for worship. Some of these still do. The circuit engaged a ‘grace worker’ ([www.graceproject.org.uk](http://www.graceproject.org.uk)) who established a toddler group and links into the

neighbourhood. A circuit steward, Andrew Lewis, took over some of the day-to-day project organisation and helped it transition into what it is now.

Four years ago, the Revd Jane Gaffney was stationed as a probationer to the circuit with the ‘Newbold Project’ as part of her profile. After heart-searching questioning, an MA dissertation and prayerful reflection on the way forward, something new and exciting is happening under Jane’s guidance. Today, we provide a welcoming venue and offer a wide range of activities and opportunities to make friends, where people can simply come and ‘be’.

Newbold works with the strapline “Growing loving community”. We created a prayer room, Messy Church attracts all ages, the toddler group thrives, and *Folk on the Water* offers the chapel as an acoustic candle-lit space to socialise and enjoy music. In community partnership, there’s a job club, dance lessons, coffee on tap, and last October saw the launch of Newbold Chapel Café, with the positive purpose of ‘social eating’ promoted by Superkitchen ([www.superkitchen.org](http://www.superkitchen.org)).

The tempting, familiar path would have been to sell our chapel. But the vision of a small number, the endorsement of the Circuit Meeting, the commitment and hard work of people from at least four churches within the circuit, the support and encouragement of many local people, a probationer asking awkward questions about mission, all brought Newbold Chapel to a new beginning – we are sure that the kingdom is happening.



# Church committed to its community

**S**andylands Methodist Church, also known as 'Cornerstone', sits alongside a 1930s housing estate of the same name, Sandylands, accommodating around 3,000 people. The current church building offers a modern, warm and multi-functional space for both the worshipping congregation and people from the community. Today our membership stands at 98, with an additional 40 or so regular visitors.

Ten years ago under the leadership of the Revd Andrew Webb (2002-14) Cornerstone members stepped out in faith. They began the 'Community Project' and employed their first full-time community worker, Colin Marchment. Colin laid the project foundations by networking and building relationships with key stakeholders and residents of Sandylands. In 2011 Jonny Gios succeeded Colin, after he left to undertake pre-ordination training.

Sandylands Methodist Church's mission statement – "Sharing God's love, transforming lives" – informs the mission activities of the church to love the local community in practical ways. This takes many forms, but for us mission is rooted in:

## Hospitality

Our church building plays an important part in creating an hospitable environment for all our guests. We have a variety of programs, for people of all ages and backgrounds, theological persuasion and stages of faith. Each activity responds to the felt needs of the community; 'Who let the dads out', youth and children's groups, parent and toddler group, pop-up drop-in café, credit union access, a craft group, Girls' Brigade, an over 60s

club, holiday clubs, Causeway (for folk with disabilities), and lots more. This summer for the first time we ran a Holiday Club for the over-60s – greatly appreciated by those who had never been before.

## A faithful presence by faithful people

It is important for our community to know we are here for the long haul. Building relationships involves all members of Cornerstone, whether handing out welcome bags to new residents or visiting those in need.

## Stepping out in faith and risk-taking

The folk at Cornerstone are visionary and take risks. This means punching well above our weight, what with a £450,000 re-development project, sustaining an ongoing funding commitment for the Community Project and recently building an accessible new office for me on the ground floor.

Keeping pace with opportunities being created by the Community Project is costly in terms of time and energy. And it is sacrificial, as many of our folk work full-time.

## Partnering with the community

Jonny says: "It's vital as we engage with our local communities, that we strive to work *with* them, and not just serve them. It's a two way relationship that seeks to build and empower." Recently, Cornerstone worked *with* local residents to raise £140,000 for a new play park within one year. An amazing feat for a small group of people.

## Hope

It's about stepping out in faith and not knowing what is around the corner. But one thing is crucial – it is relationships with people that matter. Shining as stars to those around us with the love of Christ.

**Sandylands Methodist Church in Kendal, gateway to the Lake District, takes seriously the call to mission in its surrounding community. Wendy Thornton, probationer, tells the story.**



Above: Wendy Thornton outside Cornerstone

Left: Sandylands community and church working together

Below: Jonny the Christingle!



# Mission – incarnational, contextual and long-term

As the Revd Dr Chris Blake comes towards the end of his eight-year appointment as Principal at Cliff College, he reflects on the College's significant involvement in equipping individuals and churches for mission and evangelism.

Chris Blake at Cliff College

**C**hrist for All – All for Christ has been a central affirmation in the life of Cliff College since its earliest days. How this has worked out in the college's 110-year life has changed greatly. Looking back to when all Cliff students were full-time and residential, and at the college for usually no more than a year, the summer mission activities were key events in the college's annual programme.

Today, the vast majority of the college's students study part-time and spend most of the year deeply involved in mission in their local situations – either in paid roles or as volunteers. This perhaps reflects the move from seeing mission as a special event that we organise once a year, to viewing mission as incarnational, contextual and long-term. This is based in our belief in the God of mission and the recognition that we are all invited to share in God's continuing missional activity.

## Open to the Spirit

We therefore have to keep listening to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. As we are caught up in God's mission at Cliff, so we are able to effectively resource the Church to proclaim the good news of Jesus in relevant ways. Even in my time as Principal, I have seen many important changes in how the college equips people for mission. Each change reflects the rich diversity of mission opportunities that our students are exploring – demonstrated in both our university-validated degrees and our short course options.

Our vocational part-time undergraduate

programme has, for many years, included Children's and Youth Mission and Ministry options. Recently, we added Third Age and Creative Arts options, and plans are in hand to introduce Sports and Family Mission and Ministry options soon.

At MA level, we have expanded the programme with over 25 different units. These reflect on mission across a wide range of subjects, including Pioneering Ministries, Rural Mission, Religious Pluralism, Evangelism, Leadership and Wesleyan Theology. Our two newest units, Mission and Globalisation, and Disability, Theology and Mission add even more possibilities for being equipped.

For someone wanting to enhance their involvement in mission at a local level we have a five-day short course. Options include Schools Ministry and Family Ministry, as well as the many different streams of our annual Summer School programme.

These diverse options demonstrate the rich varieties of mission in which people are involved. As I look back on my time at Cliff, I am privileged to have met so many people who came to be resourced for their local mission. Women and men are looking beyond the traditional patterns to explore new ways of being involved in pioneering mission. That is so exciting to see and to hear. I've been thrilled to see the college playing an important part in making these outward-looking activities not only possible, but effective contributions to God's mission.

*"We therefore have to keep listening to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. As we are caught up in God's mission at Cliff, so we are able to effectively resource the Church to proclaim the good news of Jesus in relevant ways."*

## Cliff College

Tel: +44 (0) 1246 584200 · Email: [reception@cliffcollege.ac.uk](mailto:reception@cliffcollege.ac.uk)

[www.cliffcollege.ac.uk](http://www.cliffcollege.ac.uk)

# Forming mission-oriented ministers

The Revd Gary Hall, Methodist Tutor of Practical Theology, describes how disciples discover depth, challenges and community at Queen's Foundation.

**D**isciples arrive at Queen's from all around these isles, chosen by the people of the Methodist Church to represent them in public ministries. Within twenty-one months most are on their way to serve in the circuits where they have been stationed. Each of them could tell a unique story of what happens in between.

Forming ministers depends to a large extent on how well we pay attention to, and work with, the details of each disciple's story. It depends on how the students themselves pay attention to the details of their interaction with one another, and with the many other lives and new experiences they encounter during an intense, disruptive and sometimes disorienting time of transition.

We honour the disruptions as students cross thresholds into unfamiliar territories, whether that means reading the Bible more rigorously or talking faith with a rabbi, discovering one another's assumptions about Methodism or working out how to communicate Christian faith in a world

consumed by consumerism. Active attention to social justice issues is no less a requirement here than grappling with the complexities of Christian doctrine or classics of Christian spirituality and worship. Students discover deeper capacities to read the world, to read themselves and to read from the wealth of literature passed on by witnesses, teachers and theologians who have shaped the ways we think about God and faith. Ideas are regularly tested, challenged and grounded as students move between classes and local churches, families and neighbourhoods, reflective community meetings or prophetic actions. We eat together. We pray together. We celebrate and we grieve together. We encourage the risks of trying things out and lowering our defences, while at the same time learning to make safe spaces for one another. The broad range of experiences and perspectives amongst this ever-changing community teaches us about our interdependence, and reminds us continually of the limits of what we think we know.

As tutors, we have the privilege of seeing mission-oriented ministers being formed as we ourselves continue to be formed for the task with which we are entrusted. We don't 'make ministers', nor could we. What we do is keep on working to establish and sustain the conditions where good formation is more likely to happen. Then we trust that God is with us as we grow in Christ, rooted and grounded in love.



Main picture: Gary Hall at the Queen's Foundation campus

Middle: Leaving chapel after student-led midday worship

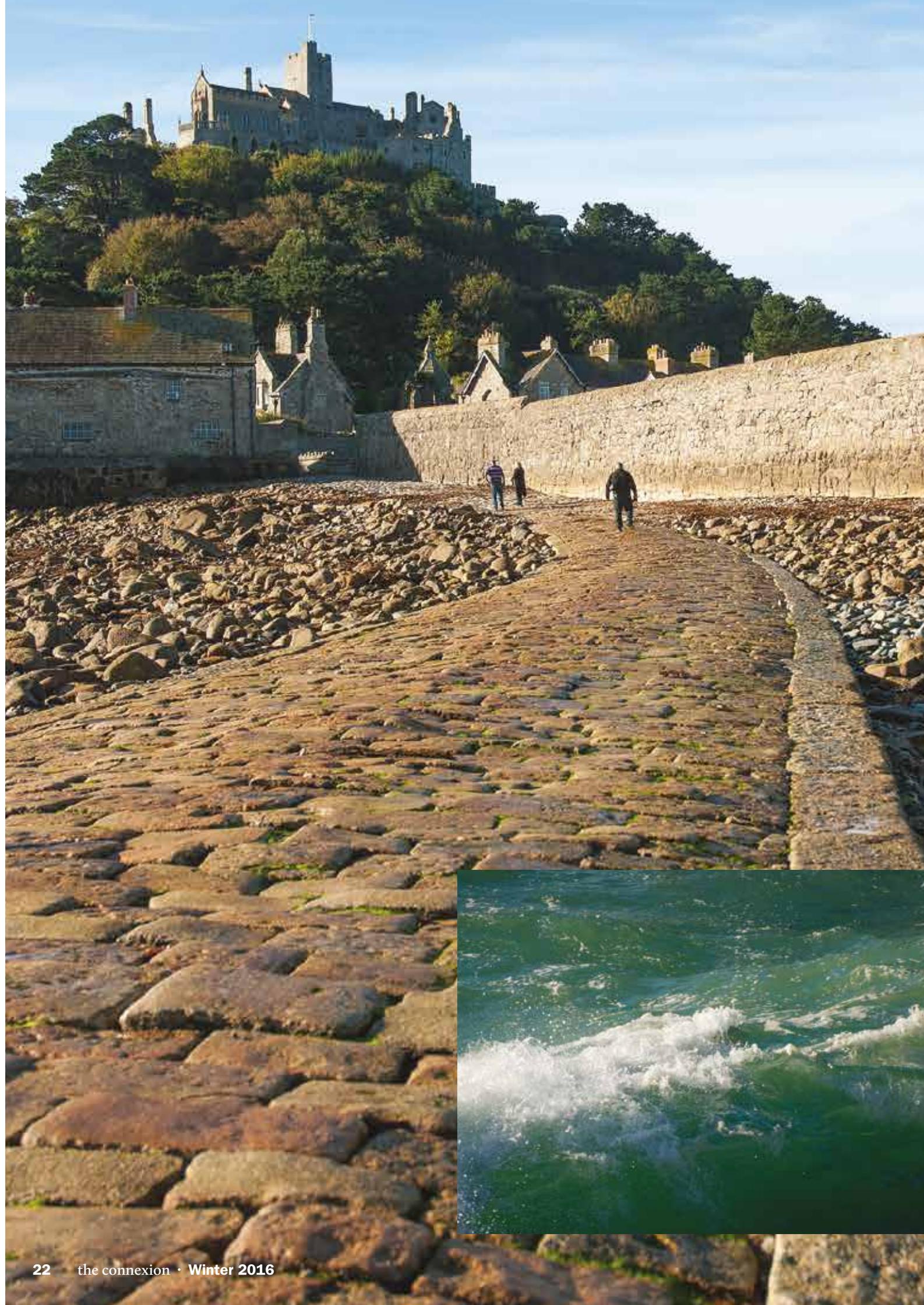
Above: Breakout group discussion

Left: Gathering for worship in Queen's chapel

**The Queen's Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education**

Tel: +44 (0)121 4541527 · Email: [enquire@queens.ac.uk](mailto:enquire@queens.ac.uk)

[www.queens.ac.uk](http://www.queens.ac.uk)



# Reflection

*Some things grow slowly  
imperceptibly  
yet with a vigour and persistence  
made clear to one who  
pays attention  
daily  
or even occasionally  
to their transformation...*

*Marvel at those wonders  
that unfurl silently  
in the springtime of the world,  
emerging from darkness of soil  
to warmth of sunlight.  
Think of our deepest affections;  
ponder children growing,  
by the hour, the day, the year...*

*Some growth is more urgent,  
restless, hurried,  
like a great wave  
carrying within itself the energy  
of life and fullness  
and the risk  
of damage and destruction,  
of crashing  
prematurely,  
dissipating,  
dying...  
Watch the waves swelling on the rising tide  
and think of those situations  
that give rise to an expansion in our souls  
of justifiable rage,  
of gracious and energised compassion  
impelling us to action...*

*Some things  
grow into being  
with painstaking  
patience,  
taking shape  
against all the odds  
in defiance of the elements  
yet apparently at one  
with creation...*

*Contemplate the cobbled causeway  
severely damaged  
by raging storms  
and marvel at the task of repairing and rebuilding,  
re-instating this lifeline  
from shore to island, island to shore:  
each row of granite blocks  
re-set  
to withstand tidal currents and forces  
relentlessly threatening its integrity:  
each row secured in the space  
of a single low-tide hour  
before submitting to the test of  
submerging depths  
pull and pounding  
of winter waves...*

*Slowly, urgently, with painstaking patience  
may we grow in the knowledge  
of the height, depth, breadth,  
and indwelling  
of divine compassion and grace...*

*And when patterns and pathways  
are swept away, may we trust  
the ebb and flow  
of the cleansing tide;  
may we wonder afresh  
at the expanse of shoreline;  
let us walk gently  
upon the firm ground gifted to us  
step after meticulous step  
at one with the One  
who redeems life's way.*

**T**he Revd Dr Liz Smith is a presbyter who finds inspiration in relating landscape with Scripture and experience. Liz based this reflection on Ephesians 3:18-19. Both Liz and her husband Peter (Dr Peter Smith) are photographers. Peter took the shots of St Michael's Mount, Cornwall, and waves; Liz took the image of the ferns.



By engaging in God's mission, our Church is constantly extending into new and undreamt areas of work where God's presence is creating hope and sustaining lives.

**Doug Swanney**

Mission is making Methodists multilingual. When you're seized by the desire to communicate the good news to people who no longer speak your language, you'll reach for any translation to make yourself understood.

**Rachel Parkinson**

Working with people who know little about Church – but who are fascinated by Jesus – changes just about everything we thought was a priority.

**Dave Martin**

How is mission changing Methodism? A church without a mission is like a blunt pencil: no point!

**Gill Dascombe**

Mission is changing Methodism by drawing on the pioneering and fresh ways of being God's Church which are part of our roots, to shape our present engagement with God's world, so that we can build a future marked by the growth of God's kingdom.

**Ian Bell**

We are finding a new way of being Church, which is relational not organisational, and reconnects with the heart of the gospel – loving God and loving our neighbour.

**Jill Barber**

Local churches are allowing themselves to be shaped and changed by encountering God in unexpected places.

**Anna Drew**

Methodists are challenged to regard and respect every member as a follower and disciple of Jesus Christ; return to God and the word of God disclosed in Christ; spread the open table of hospitality of Christ in the wilderness; rediscover our 'social holiness'.

**Inderjit Bhogal**

Mission is an art form we may have forgotten in recent years, but now it is redefining our future to be one of service, action and prayer for God and our communities.

**Craig Gaffney**

By resourcing innovative projects and encouraging risk-taking, we can engage with the most marginalised in our communities.

**Loraine Mellor**

Mission is in the Methodist DNA. It's shaping our engagement in communities across the Connexion.

**Penny Fuller**

The poor and deeply impoverished are changing us as they call for our attention and response to physical, emotional and spiritual hunger.

**Eunice Attwood**

The rapid growth of fresh expressions of Church in the last ten years has made Methodism more outward looking, better equipped to meet real needs in local communities, and more confident in sharing the good news of Jesus.

**Graham Horsley**

**How is mission changing Methodism?**