

VALE OF AYLESBURY

METHODIST CIRCUIT

MAGAZINE



Swanbourne Church — see page 6 for cover story

April May June

2019

PASTORIAL LETTER



Rev Helen Kirk

Prayer is something we know we should do but often struggle with. Are we doing it right? Is there a special formula that will make my prayers work? What should I pray for?

I once heard a 10-year-old boy, who obviously had not revised for a geography test coming out of the exam praying 'Dear God, please make Sydney the capital of New Zealand!'

I doubt that God answered his prayer! However, it does offer an illustration of what so many of us do when we pray – we tell God what we want. Let's be honest, that's often where we start.

Yet prayer is not about talking to God but about listening; listening to the agendas of our own hearts, the fears that fill our mind, the uncertainties that we face and the struggles that are all around us, but that we cannot seem to change. We first listen to ourselves and our world and in prayer bring them into the silence of God.

To quote Mother Theresa 'We need to find God and he cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friend of silence... the more we receive in silent prayer, the more we can give in our active life'.

It feels as though we are living through extraordinary times: our nation is divided by differing ideologies that challenge our identity; there is deep anger towards our politicians and leaders and bubbling under parts of our society are signs of shocking racism.

This uncertainty is a global condition as populist or nationalist policies are pursued across the world and our planet struggles to cope with the effects of our selfish human choices.

Maybe this is where prayer comes in; not hands together eyes closed prayer but listening prayer. Prayer that is realised when we truly listen to each other and hear views and opinions that challenge our own; prayer that happens when we listen to our own fears, admitting that we do not have all the answers but need the grace of God; prayer that demands we put aside our agenda and are open to that which is 'other' than ourselves.

The question then becomes not 'how do I pray' but how do I become the answer to my prayer. As Karl Barth once wrote: 'To clasp hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorder of the world'

Maybe that is our calling today.

Helen

Paul's prayer from Ephesians 3. 14-21

'For this reason, I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.'

CIRCUIT MINISTERS

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of Thame (Christchurch) Chinnor, Cuddington and Haddenham

Rev Olufemi R W Cole-Njie (Temporary stationing by Conference)

kenfem.njie@gmail.com

Rev Dr Hayford Ofori-Attah (Supernumerary)

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Ministers' Rest Days:

Rev Helen Kirk	Friday
Rev Donna-Marie Broadbent-Kelly	Friday
Rev Keith Edwards	Wednesday
Rev Anthony Howells	Friday
Rev Romilly Micklem	Monday

Please respect their days off and avoid contacting them except in an emergency.

Circuit Service 7th April at 6.00pm

An Invitation to Everyone! - The Crucifixion

Led by Mr David Neville the extended Circuit Choir will present John Stainer's famous cantata '**The Crucifixion**', a service of anthems, solos and congregational hymns providing a moving and inspiring act of worship for **Passiontide**.

'The Crucifixion' recalls the scenes which mark the last few days of our Saviour's life on earth. From the rejoicing as he entered Jerusalem, the Passover where he gives the new commandment of love for one another, the pathos in the Garden of Gethsemane then the hostility and loneliness before Pilate, followed by the tragedy and triumph of Calvary.

'The Crucifixion' is on Sunday evening 7th April at 6.00 pm, lasting about one hour and followed by refreshments in the Hall.

Everyone is welcome to join with friends from the circuit as we contemplate Christ's suffering before the joy of resurrection at Eastertide

COVER STORY

Swanbourne Barn Service

What we are now calling the Swanbourne Barn Service rather than Open Air Service had its origins with our decision to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of our current chapel building – built in 1907, to replace the first chapel which was built in 1858. 2007 was also the 200th anniversary of the first camp meeting, held at Mow Cop on the Cheshire-Staffordshire border, which led to the creation of the Primitive Methodism Church. The Methodist Church of the time regarded this open air meeting with suspicion, and ejected the organisers, two local preachers - Hugh Bourne and William Clowes, from the Methodist Church when they refused to stop organising these open air meetings. Denied readmittance, Bourne and Clowes set up what eventually became known as the Primitive Methodist Church. The name reflected their view that they were just doing what Jesus and the original Christians had done.

As the Swanbourne chapel is small, and we expected a large congregation, the idea of an outdoor service seemed like a good way of marking both the anniversaries of Primitive Methodism and of the Swanbourne Chapel, as well as overcoming the space restrictions. The Rev Dr. Lord Leslie Griffiths was invited to be our preacher, and the Marsdens offered their farm for the occasion. The Chapel was left free for the provision of refreshments, and members of Secklow Brass provided the music.

It was not until 2010 that a second Open Air service was organised at Swanbourne – and on this occasion, the weather was not so kind, and we retreated to the nearby Barn which had been held in reserve. Since then, the Open Air Service has become an annual event, but too often it has been too wet, too windy or too hot for the open air, and so now we have decided that we will use the Barn whatever.

In more recent years, we have organised activities for young people in the afternoon, and we have also had the Aylesbury Youth Choir giving wonderful performances to add to the atmosphere. This year, we were hoping that we could hold the service a week after Rev Donna's ordination, but this proved not to be possible.

LIVE-STREAMING OF SERVICES

Background

As one of the marks of a healthy church is to have an outward-looking focus, we now live-stream our 10.30am Sunday services with a static video camera. Anyone with an internet connection will be able to see and hear them via www.thesundayservice.org.uk and **YouTube**. We are one of eight churches nationally, of various denominations taking part in this free trial. It is organised by The Sunday Service, a Christian charity funded by The Joseph Rank Foundation. Their prime aim is to reach people unable to attend church through sickness, being house-bound or in residential care. Other groups, such as our own members who are temporarily indisposed and people moving into the area might also benefit.

Our Policies

- 1.** To safeguard children and vulnerable adults, the only camera shots used, apart from the choir, will be on the sanctuary side, rather than the congregational side of the communion rail. This creates a 'virtual safety curtain'.
- 2.** All children and young people asked to take part in a service by, for instance, reading a lesson, lighting an advent calendar, singing in the Youth Choir, or taking part in a Youth Service, will each need to have written parental permission to do so.
- 3.** 'Known participants' in a service who will be in camera shot in the sanctuary area, such as preachers, worship leaders, readers, sketch participants, baptismal parties and others, will be informed of our live-streaming policies beforehand. Their participation signals their permission to be filmed.

/over

LIVE-STREAMING OF SERVICES (Cont.)

4. 'Unknown participants' in a service, such as volunteers from J Team invited to help a preacher in the sanctuary area will not be filmed. This is because it is neither possible nor desirable for the camera operator or youth leaders to ensure only those with parental permission forms can respond. A 'safe' shot will be used instead, such as the choir or the central banner.

5. Whilst we will make every effort to ensure a safe environment for all, given the widespread use of mobile phones as cameras, the church and most other public places are not 'camera-free zones.' Nor can we always avoid the potential for some toddlers and/or a retrieving parent to creep into camera shot.

6. Based on advice from Boys' Brigade HQ, we will use the same permission form on church letter-heading for all our youth organisations.

7. A succinct message about our live-streaming will be included in the Welcome slides shown before the start of the service and in the weekly notices.

8. A leaflet will be made available explaining our live-streaming and safeguarding policies and the Church Stewards will be responsible for ensuring that preachers and all service participants are made aware of them.



WHERE and WHEN TO MEET AROUND THE CIRCUIT

For a chat over a Cuppa or even a Meal



Aylesbury	Mon. To Sat. 10.00 am - 12 noon	Tea and Coffee
Cheddington	Open Doors— Fridays 10.00 am	Tea, Coffee , Light Refreshments & Fellowship
Fairford Leys	Saturdays 10.30 am - 12.00 noon	Coffee Morning coffee/tea and biscuits
Haddenham	Tuesdays 10.00 am - 12.00 noon	Maisie's Coffee Morning Fairtrade goods, bring and buy items usually on sale
North Marston - Wesley Centre	Friday 10am-12pm 2nd Wednesday in month 12pm-2pm.	Coffee mornings Monthly Lunches
Stewkley	Lunch on Saturday 12 noon - 1.30 pm 27th Apr, 18th May & 15th Jun	Treat yourself to a 2 course lunch with tea or coffee for £7.50. C
Stoke Hammond	Wednesday 10.30 - 11.45 am	Coffee Morning
Stoke Mandeville	Most Fridays 2.00 - 4.00 pm Monthly: First Fridays 12.00 - 2.00 pm	'POP-IN' for a cup of tea/ coffee and a chat. Light lunches £3.50
Thame Christchurch	Tuesdays & Fridays 10.00 am - 12 noon	Coffee Mornings

Waddesdon	Alternate Tuesdays. 11.00 am - 2.00 pm	Light lunches
Wingrave	Alternate Tuesdays	Nup End Cafe Lunches

Other Special Gatherings

Cheddington	Mondays 9.30 -11.00 am (except holidays)	The Toast Baby & Toddler Group
Stewkley	Wednesday 10.30 – 11.30 am Friday 7.30pm 12th & 19th April	Daisy Club for children from birth to school age— term time only. Mutual Fellowship, Various speakers. Con- tact John Jones 01525 217795
Swanbourne 	Fridays 10-30am in the Chapel: stories, songs, prayers, nibbles, ba- bies, toddlers, mums & carers all very welcome	Pram Service will con- tinue—for next Services Contact : Frankie Fisher on 720454
Whitchurch	Wednesdays 10 am - 12 noon 'Little Steps' fun for babies, toddlers and parents.	A mums & toddler group meeting. With toys, crafts music and snacks. Everyone is welcome.

LEARNING AND GROWING

Aylesbury

J Team (Sunday School) Sundays 10.30 am

Contact: Mrs. Vivienne Kemp 01296 399315

Girls Brigade Mondays 6.15 - 7.30 pm

Contact: Sarah Davidge 01296 437852

Banner Group Tuesdays 2.00 - 4.00 pm

Contact: Mrs. Brenda Horne 01296 428580

Tuesday Fellowship 1st & 3rd Tuesdays 2.30 - 3.45 pm

Contact: Ms Coral Soulsby 01296 707298, Ms Angela Smith
01296 483696

Boys Brigade Tuesdays 6.00 - 9.00 pm

Contact: Mr Steve Kemp 01296 399315

Monthly Bible Study:

Dates to be advised on website

Chinnor: Regular Activities

Weekly:

Activity Club (Youth club for 7-11yr olds)

Thurs 6.30 - 8.00 pm (term time)

Traidcraft (Fairtrade) sales

Bring and Buy table for nominated charities (Sunday)

Fortnightly:

Friday 7.00 - 9.00 pm (fortnightly) Friday Night Club (all ages)

Table Tennis, Scrabble, Pizza etc.

Monthly:

Exploring Faith. Monday 8.00 - 9.30 pm

Ecumenical Groups/ Activities:

Fortnightly:

Mothers Bible Study 10.00 am -12.00 noon

on Tues. or Weds. morning for mums

Mums prayer group: Friday 9 - 9.30 am - for those attending
St Andrew's School

Ignite - Sunday 7.30 - 9.00 pm for 14yr olds to explore faith
and life issues

Haddenham

Monthly:

Haddenham Fellowship Group evening meetings, Contact Mrs Mary White
01844 291677

Princes Risborough

Fortnightly:

SALT (Sharing And Learning Together) Meets in homes on Thursdays

Monthly:

"TUESDAY FELLOWSHIP - We meet at the Church on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at the Church at 2.00 pm for a time of Fellowship together with a varied programme, followed by a cup of tea and chat, everyone is welcome to join us. Contact Pam Scott 01844 346857

See the **Circuit Website** for details of these meetings

Stone

Monthly:

The Fourth Tuesday Fellowship meets at 2.30 pm
Contact Mrs. Sue Spinks 01296 748369

Waddesdon

Monthly:

1st. Monday Friendship Club especially for the Over 50s meeting at 2.30 - 4.30 pm. This is very much a social get together and anyone is welcome.

Contact Barbara Warne 01296 651417.

Weedon

Monthly: Monday Bible Study Group

LEARNING AND GROWING

Thame Christchurch.

Weekly

Bible Study on Thursday at 7.30 pm.

Fortnightly

Church Singers on 2nd and 4th Monday at 7.45 pm

Monthly

WIT (Women in Thame) on Monday at 7.30 pm Varied programme of talks, activities, and a visit to the theatre.

Parentalk

THE PRIMARY YEARS

Might you, or someone you know, be interested in attending **Parentalk**?

Parentalk gives parents the opportunity to share experiences, explore parenting principles, watch real life stories and animations, befriend other parents and more.



Mel Brown our Family Worker

The sessions are for an hour and a half and the course is run over 6 weeks. Children are welcome and will be catered for. As to what we would do, we will watch DVD clips, discuss different topics, share experiences, drink tea and coffee and eat biscuits and cake!

If you are interested, text or speak to Mel on 07717121887 or Email: familyworker.amc@gmail.com



Aylesbury Methodist Church & Centre



What's been happening behind the screen?

You are invited to find out at

The Official Opening

of our refurbished

**Church Welcome Area on Saturday 4th May
at 2.30pm.**

Mrs Pauline Latham

**will unveil a commemorative plaque remembering her husband
Brian Latham,
the first champion and leader of the project.**

**The service will be led by Rev. Helen
Kirk and include the commissioning of
The Listening Team.**

Refreshments in the hall afterwards.

All are welcome.

Talking of God Together

Dear All,

In our discussions before Christmas, I promised some follow-up sessions based on the feedback we had from the Circuit Consultations. The feedback highlighted the subject of our difficulty of speaking about Jesus to one another and also to those outside our churches.

Well, here is the next phase. We have organised five sessions on the dates below, all at Stoke Mandeville Methodist Church, all starting with refreshments at 7 pm and ending by 9 pm.

The evenings are open to everyone and are designed to be informative, worthwhile and (even though the subject is serious,) fun! The hope is that these sessions will contribute to the Growth Plan process and enable us to grow together.

The dates are all Tuesday evenings:

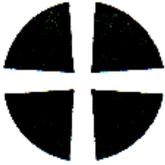
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| 2nd April | with Rev Dr Romilly Micklem:
'Creating a Culture of Welcome'. |
| 16th April | with Rev Helen Kirk:
'Talking of God Together - A Present God'. |
| 30th April | with Arthur Sara:
'Talking of God Together - A Listening God'. |
| 14th May | with Rev Donna Broadbent Kelly:
'Talking of God Together - A Caring God'. |
| 4th June | with Rev Keith Edwards:
'Talking of God Together - A Speaking God'. |

Please put the dates in your diary now!

Looking forward to seeing a crowded church again - the turnout has been amazing for the last few meetings, please keep it up.

See you there.

Pete

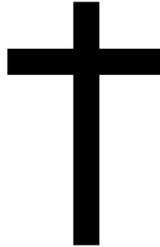


*Vale of Aylesbury
Methodist Circuit*

THE CRUCIFIXION

by

JOHN STAINER



An act of worship for Congregation and Choir depicting the events leading up to

Christ's death upon the cross.

Presented by the Circuit Choir together with the Choir of Tring Parish Church and friends from other local churches and choirs under the direction of Cliff Brown

Led by the Mr David Neville

Aylesbury Methodist Church

Sunday 7th April 2019 at 6.00 pm

(Repeated at Sts. Peter & Paul, Tring on

Sunday 14th April at 6.30 pm)

EVERYONE WELCOME

Refreshments will be served in the Hall after the service.

Dates For this Quarter:

Saturday 6th April—at Aylesbury Methodist Church—
Ghanaian Night at 6pm (See Poster)

April 7th at 6.00 pm in Aylesbury A Passiontide Service
(see facing page and Page 5)

April 28th at 3.00 pm in Stoke Hammond.
The Final Service and Thanksgiving in the Chapel.
The Service will be led by Rev Helen Kirk.

May 4th at 2.30 pm The Official Opening of the
refurbished Church Welcome Area at Aylesbury Methodist
Church & Centre (see page 14)

May 8th at 7.30 pm 34th Annual Organ Event Aylesbury
Methodist Church & Centre (see page 18)

June 2nd at 5.00 pm in Stewkley Methodist
The Rev Donna-marie Broadbent-Kelly's
Testimonial Service.
The Service will be led by Rev Helen Kirk.

June 8th at 5.00 pm Special Social event at the Stoke
Mandeville Community Centre - Watch the websites for
news.

June 23rd at 5.00 pm The Circuit Open Air Service
at Brise's Farm Barn, Swanbourne. The Service will be led
by Rev Donna-marie Broadbent-Kelly.
In future to be known as The Swanbourne Barn Service.
(see cover picture and Page 6)



**Aylesbury Methodist
Church & Centre
Buckingham Street, Aylesbury**

34th ANNUAL ORGAN EVENT

Presenting the outstanding

Scott Brothers Duo

***Jonathan Scott-Organ and
Tom Scott-Piano***

***(Experience a foretaste by listening to
their performances on YouTube)***

WEDNESDAY 8th MAY 2019 @ 7.30 pm

(Doors open at 7.00 pm)

Entrance: £12.00

Or £10.00 If booked in advance.

(Students entrance free)

***Tickets on sale from early April, available from
the Church Office on weekday mornings or direct
from Derrick Matthews (01296 488076)***



Ghanaian Night

(First of its kind)



**Presenting Ghanaian Culture and Dance
Plus a taste of indigenous Ghanaian
cuisine/dishes and display of artifacts**

at

Aylesbury Methodist Church and Centre

on

Saturday 6th April 2019

Time

6.00pm—10.00pm

Free Entertainment - Donations welcome!



Meal Tickets

**Family- £20.00, Adults - £8.00 and Children—
£4.00**

Purchase from Aylesbury Methodist Church Office

Telephone 01296 426526

*In support of Karibuni
Trust and Alfian
Foundation*



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www.karibuni.org.uk





The Vale of Aylesbury Methodist Circuit



Caravan and Camping Weekend 2019

Having talked to Helen and others about availability we have decided that this year the circuit caravan and camping weekend will be **Friday 14 June to Sun 16th**.

Also after consultation we have agreed to go to Cotswold view Caravan and Camping Park in Charlbury Oxon.

We have visited the site and it seems to meet all our requirements although they are not willing to take a group booking so anyone wishing to go must make their own reservation.

The site can be contacted by telephone 01608 810314.
Website www.cotswoldview.co.uk.

The site have said that if people book early, January or February and tell them they are in our group then we will be pitched together.

Further information can be obtained from us and we would like to know if you have booked a pitch. We will send out reminders in January and February.

Arthur and Chris Sara
chrisara096@gmail.com Telephone 01296 484310

Aylesbury Youth Ball!

In December the young people in Aylesbury took part in their first Christmas Ball. To say that everyone made a special effort to dress-up for the evening is an understatement. The guys wore suits and ties, and the girls were elegant and sophisticated; with some getting another chance to wear their long flowing prom dresses. It was a very special evening with a splendid 3 course meal, prepared by some of the best chefs in Aylesbury; and the fabulous music was provided by



Aylesbury's very own Austin and his Frog Disco. The young people danced the night away. The night was such a



wonderful success that we have already booked the date for this year's Ball:

Friday **December 20th 2019!** So if there are any young people around the Circuit who would like to join us this year



then please come and join us.
Mel Brown - familyworker.amc@mail.com

FAIRTRADE MATTERS - Fairtrade headlines



Nationally: Many of you may be aware there were concerns in late 2018 that Traidcraft might stop trading. Having adjusted its trading model, and with the motivation of devoted fairtraders, the news is that Traidcraft will continue to operate, focussing on lines with a higher level of trade. Until new catalogues are issued in March, the current range can be found at www.traidcraftshop.co.uk .

Do not under-estimate the 'ripple effects' of every single purchase in terms of development of communities and self-worth and income to the producer! Your support matters to so many.

2019 Events

Did your church or community put on an event during the recent Fairtrade Fortnight? (25th February to 10th March 2019) If so please tell us about it.

Across the country many an event, sales table and coffee morning was held to show support for farmers and workers.

Summer Days!

Are you holding a fundraising event over the Summer? If you would like to offer Fairtrade items please feel free to make contact with Rod. Items can be provided on Sale or Return

Campaigns

Please watch out for and do what you can to support the new campaigns regarding Cocoa and introducing the practice of paying a 'Living Income'.

Many of you will be familiar with the terms 'minimum wage' and 'living wage' but may be less so with the term 'living income'.

As a producer or farmer, there is no one to pay your wage. Without guarantees that payments for products will cover the cost of production or growing, there can be shortfalls. If shortfalls persist this gives rise to debt, loss of stability and poverty.

Fairtrade provides a means for producers to have a more secure income and livelihood, enabling them to provide for themselves, their families and their community.

As an example, Cote d'Ivoire is a major producer of Cocoa used for chocolate bars. Only 6% of their cocoa producers operate under Fairtrade conditions. As a result of a drop in Cocoa prices in 2018, incomes have dropped and communities affected.

If the practice of a living income were to be applied it would help smooth the impact of the drop in prices. The impact and hardships arising of the reduced prices would be lessened. Recently reported figures highlight farmers are receiving \$1 a day when \$2.50 a day is required to provide a living income.

The proposal is for a 3 year campaign to stimulate discussions to introduce Living Incomes and ease the consequence of swings in trade to producers, individuals, families and communities. visit www.fairtradefoundation.org or contact Rod Thorpe 351565 for more info.

Holidaying ideas?

If you are thinking of having some time away, how about a trip to meet a Fairtrade producer on a 'Meet the people' tour? Contact traidcraft@skedaddle.co.uk for information or visit www.meetthepeopletours.co.uk. Tours include trips to Chile and Vietnam.

If you would like to view Traidcraft's range of products please ask to view a copy of the catalogue. Remember orders placed through Rod Thorpe result in 10% of the sale price being donated to charity. Further, delivery is free.

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EASTER 2019

With all the discussions and concerns about the consequences of modern day use of plastics and Palm Oil it is good to see some Easter Egg producers have responded by making Plastic and Palm Oil Free Easter Eggs. This includes The Real Easter Egg, both the Milk and Dark versions. With the current focus on cocoa (see separate article) please check out if there is something in the range of **Fairtrade Easter Eggs** that might suit your requirements.

For more info or to place orders contact Rod Thorpe

EASYFUNDRAISING

This means of fundraising may not be for all but it can provide an additional income stream of funds just by going about everyday or those occasional transactions.

At Chinnor, from a relatively small number of members and their extended families, it has been possible to generate a few hundred pounds to add to the church coffers.

If you are booking a holiday, arranging insurance, buying electrical goods or just buying everyday items, as long as the company used is part of the scheme, a specified percentage is added to the fund, which is then paid quarterly to your cause.

If you are fundraising you might wish to explore it at:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk>

YOUR CIRCUIT WEBSITE

www.aylesburyvale.org.uk

The Circuit Website, in its current form, is now 74 months old, during that time it has had, on average, over 6000 visitors each year; are **YOU** in that number?

It can be accessed on most Smart Phones, Tablets, Laptops and Desk Top Computers so most folk will have the ability to see what is going on round the Circuit.

What you can see is, of course, dependent upon what is posted there; have **YOU** ever considered writing an article or even suggesting a topic for inclusion?

It is impossible for one editor to know everything that is happening in the Circuit without your help; by far the best way to help is to become a **Sub Editor** for your church, there are some already in some churches, ideally there should be at least **one for each church!**

Could that be you?

Sub-editors have permission to:

- Edit Pages
- Create/ edit articles
- Add files to the document library
- Add images to the picture galleries
- Add dates to the circuit calendar

If you are willing and able to serve your church in this way please email r.collis245@btinternet.com for further details.

Stoke Hammond !!!!!

For many of you in the circuit Stoke Hammond is just the name of a church on the circuit preaching plan. Yet for those who have visited the chapel you will know that it is a friendly congregation, small in number, but always faithful.

Stoke Hammond Methodist Church was opened in October 1927.

When the Old Wesleyan Chapel in Chapel Yard became inhabitable, the Methodist families of Stoke Hammond worked hard to build a new Chapel. The parents of Mary Bonner and Margaret Aitken were heavily involved in the building of the Chapel. When the Chapel opened in October 1927, Margaret's father opened up a new village shop on the same day and recalls it being a fantastic day full of much excitement and celebration.

Stoke Hammond Methodist Church was known for its Sunday School, there was not one at the Anglican Church so most of the children in the village attended the chapel for Sunday School. There were two sessions, 10.30am (for an hour) and at 2pm just before the afternoon service. Sunday school was a big part of the life of Stoke Hammond and most of its current members were part of the Sunday school and have fond memories of Sunday School parties and outings to Wickstead Park near Kettering.

This snippet of history is a reminder of the wonderful witness and service that Stoke Hammond Methodist Church has offered to the village for over 90 years.

Sadly, in recent years the congregation has dwindled despite efforts to reach out to the community. At the Autumn Church Council, the trustees were faced with a significant property bill and made the decision to cease to worship. This was not an easy decision but one that was supported by all the remaining members.

The Methodist church has certain procedures to follow before Stoke Hammond can be officially closed. The Circuit meeting and District synod need to approve the decision and so in the meantime there will continue to be a regular shared service with our Anglican friends in the village and the Wednesday coffee mornings will still go ahead.

The congregation at Stoke Hammond feel a deep sense of loss however they also feel that this is the right thing to do. Since the new year they have found a welcome in neighbouring churches . Please hold them in your prayers at this time.

On 28th April 2019 the whole Circuit is invited to a service of thanksgiving for the witness and service of the chapel over the years.

This will be the final service in the chapel.

Helen Kirk & Donna Broadbent- Kelly

ITEMS FOR THE MAGAZINE:

Items for the July—Sept 2019 issue should be forwarded to the following Email addresses:

Solomon Awadzi **01296 489384**

Email: [solokawadzi@hotmail.com](mailto:solakawadzi@hotmail.com)

Items for the Magazine should be copied to Roy Collis - see below.

Please submit Magazine Items by the 15th May 2019

AMENDMENTS to CIRCUIT Database:

Details of changes to existing information in the **Circuit Database** should be sent immediately they occur to: Rev Helen Kirk: revhelenkirk@sky.com and to: r.collis245@btinternet.com

ITEMS FOR PUBLISHING ON THE WEBSITES:

WEBSITE ADDRESSES:

Circuit: www.aylesburyvale.org.uk

Aylesbury: www.aylesburymethodists.org.uk

Fairford Leys: www.fairfordleyschurch.org.uk

All enquiries or suggestions should be addressed to::

Peter Green for the **AMC Website** :

peterb.green@ntlworld.com **01296 424653**

Roy Collis for the **Circuit Website:**

r.collis245@btinternet.com **01296 630989**

or

Rev. Keith Edwards ulysee798@gmail.com **01296 423363**