

The Methodist Church

The Manse
Higham Ferrers

Tel: 01933 312778
email: lesleydinham@gmail.com

31 December 2021

To:



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ

The Nene Valley Circuit

I send my Greetings to you all in the name of our Incarnate God, hoping that despite the continuation of uncertainty with COVID, you've managed to have a joy-filled Christmas in celebrating the coming of love to the world in the person of Jesus Christ our Lord.

It's been a while since I last wrote as your Superintendent. I therefore thought the coming in of 2022 the perfect time to be in touch with you all once again.

Looking back

I thank God that by the constant vigilance of our Stewards and the common sense of everyone, we've managed to keep all our Churches open for worship this year. I understand that lettings are still slow in returning to some of our Churches, but it is to be hoped that this will improve in 2022. This is why it was decided, because of continuing uncertainties surrounding the virus, to keep the assessment at a reduced rate for another year, and to give the chance of hopefully, building up reserves again. This reduced rate will continue until the assessments are due for renewal in August 2022 when they will return to the full rate (which will be an informed decision with up-to-date data collected from each Church).

Looking forward

So, what to look forward to in 2022 as the Nene Valley Circuit.

Excellent news is, we will very shortly have a Circuit Administrator. Bradley is due to begin his role in Circuit, for 12 hours each week, on 10th January and I'm very much looking forward to working with him. Amongst his priorities will be to help Jamie Poole

bring our Circuit website up-to-date, to institute a much-needed Circuit Diary and to produce a quarterly Circuit Newsletter. Bradley will be contacting all our Churches for information. PLEASE bear in mind that our 'online' information will only be as good as the information provided. I sincerely hope therefore you will be willing to help Bradley in giving as much information as you can so that he, in turn, can create something worth reading. Our website for the Circuit is, so to speak, our shop window and if there's nothing worth seeing there, then why would people from outside the Church want to come in and browse!

Talking of things Circuit. We will, on January 30th be worshipping in just two of our Churches, Hope and Wellingborough. It is hoped, by then, that the Service from Hope will be live-streamed on zoom. This new initiative is to promote fellowship within our Circuit following comments made, when online services ceased, by quite a few people that they missed seeing others from around the Circuit. Therefore, the CLT agreed – with the approval of the Circuit Meeting – that on the 5th Sunday of each quarter, we should get together in two places of worship around the Circuit.

I hope and pray you will support this initiative by attending and, if there's room in your car, please offer a lift to someone who doesn't drive so that as many of us as possible can be together to grow our faith and enjoy fellowship. Rev'd Kim will be at Hope with those from Irthlingborough and Raunds and I will be at Wellingborough with those from Earls Barton, Irchester and Wollaston. The Services will begin at 11am which should give everyone chance to get to either one of the Churches.

Another event to look forward to is the Cantata 'My Beloved Son' which will be performed by those in the Circuit who love to sing, on Good Friday and Holy Saturday. I will be conducting and rehearsals will be every Friday at Hope Church from 7.30-9pm beginning on 14th January. Please come and join us – the more who come and sing, the more glory will be given to God through our offering of voices in praise for the life, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I want to encourage us all to become stronger as a Circuit. Not one of our Churches is an island; each Church is part of something bigger as a Circuit, as a District as the Connexion, as God's people in the world seeking to Plant Faith, Nurture Growth and Grow God's Kingdom.

And so, to our buildings....

Hope Methodist Church: Towards the end of this difficult year has seen the completion of Phase 1 of their redevelopment project which is absolutely brilliant. The fundraising hasn't stopped yet though as they seek to fundraise for the removal of the portacabins – which have served their purpose very well – so to make space for a new car park.

Earls Barton Methodist Church: Jon Rees, pianist extraordinaire has been working, along with others, to be able to send out to tender, in the New Year, plans for bringing this lovely Chapel up to date. Jon says: The project includes a new, one-level floor in the main Church, new toilet facilities, storage for our community users, better disabled access and additional kitchenettes upstairs and down. The installation of a lifting platform will

transform the usage of the upstairs rooms. We are still in the process of applying for external grants but are just £10,000 off our Phase 1 total so within sight of raising the funds needed to complete the Project thanks to the generosity of individuals, the Circuit, District and other grant-giving bodies.

Raunds Methodist Church: Rev'd Mike Langstaff, who thought he'd retired! along with his team have been working tirelessly to obtain monies from grant-making bodies so to get their Project off the ground. Mike says: We are currently just over 60% of our target and in January we apply for planning permission for new ramps etc. Hopefully, if all goes well, we should be ready to start building work at the end of 2022. Keep us in your prayers.

So, as 2021 comes to an end and 2022 begins, I want to ask you a very personal question, one which is on my heart to ask and one which John Wesley asked at the beginning of all small group meetings and that question is: 'How is it with your soul?' This is a far deeper question than: 'How are you?' What I mean is, how is your soul doing? How is your spirit faring? *Really*, how are you?

So often, we ask: 'How are you?' out of habit and more often than not, the answer is: 'I'm fine.' But are you *really fine*? Perhaps it's a question we like to avoid because answering it forces us to really take stock on the health of our souls, which often leads to admitting that we may not be doing as well as we want others to think. But, all the same, I want you to ask yourself that question as the New Year begins: 'How is it with your soul?'

Our daily walk with God is a wonderful pilgrimage of faith but sometimes we get lost along the way, we take a wrong turn, and sometimes all seems barren and dried up but, never doubt that God is with you, even in those 'lost' moments. Never doubt that God wants to walk alongside you, whichever wrong turn you might have taken at this moment and if you feel you want to talk about, or explore the question, please don't hesitate to contact either Rev'd Kim or myself because we are called, after all, to be your Spiritual Guide.

Meeting for fellowship and sharing our faith on a Sunday morning is a lovely thing to do but there's so much more if you want to go deeper with God. Not only does God say: come to me all you who are heavy laden and I will give you rest; but he also says it only takes faith the size of a mustard seed to move mountains. Do you believe God can do that for your life in 2022? Only you can answer that question. So, 'how is it with your soul?'

My prayer is that 2022 will be all you need it to be, by the grace and love of God who loves you so much that he gave his life for you, so that you can live your life to the full.

Rev'd Lesley
Superintendent Minister