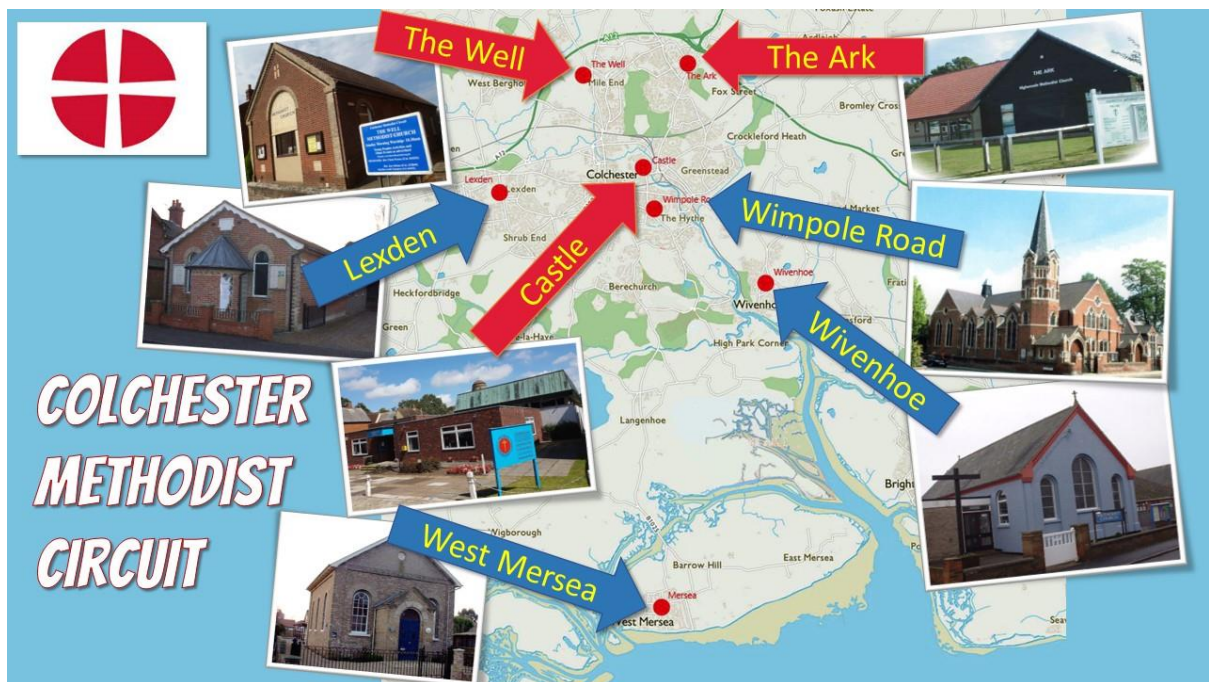


Colchester Methodist Circuit

# Newsletter

Edition 4 – September 2023 (redacted)



## LETTER: From our Superintendent, Rev Chris Preece



Dear Friends,

There was a time where a train reaching its final platform would see and hear the conductor walking down the train saying, 'all change!' Today the automated announcement reminds us that the train will be terminating at this station and please can we remember to take all of our belongings with us. Both have their place. As we move into September, there is change for us to navigate as a Circuit.

On 1<sup>st</sup> September from 7.30pm at Wimpole Road, we welcome Rev Hannah Chun and her family as Hannah begins her time in the Circuit. For her and the family everything has changed with moving to a new city, roles, and life. For the churches Hannah will serve there is also considerable change. As we know, any change of personnel within the team brings a new dynamic and new possibilities.

Since the last newsletter was written we have also welcomed a new Circuit Finance Officer. Alistair is working well within the team as we navigate to new ways of working.

Wherever we look there seems to be change all around us. It is right, of course, that we hold Hannah and her family, Alistair, the Circuit, people and churches in our prayers at this time. We can also celebrate and praise the constancy of God's character. Jesus who is the same yesterday, today and forever, reminds us that God's character is sure and dependable in all things. We know that we will be guided by the Holy Spirit in all that we do and in all the changes we face. Through the Holy Spirit, we will be guided by God into this new chapter of the Circuit's life knowing that Jesus walks alongside us.

It is an exciting time! Over the past year, we have focused on mission planning and will continue to do so over these next months. As I look back over my first year in the Circuit, I am so thankful in the way that everyone has come together working alongside one another and look forward to that continuing to deepen and strengthen in this coming year.

We know that we will continue to face change as it is a fact of life. We also know that God will lead us through it. As we bring the life of the Circuit through its people to God in prayer, spend time in the company of Jesus and be led by the Holy Spirit, great things will happen! We look forward to the year to come as we continue to work and share together in all that we do.

God bless,  
Chris

**COLCHESTER** Methodists' new minister, probationer Rev Hannah Chun, has arrived in the city with her family and will be formally welcomed to the Circuit at a service at Wimpole Road on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> September.

The new Connexional year sees welcome changes in the Circuit. As well as Hannah's appointment, Alistair has started a new role as Circuit Finance Officer, which will give our current Circuit treasurer the chance to finally retire from his role.

Alistair's is a paid-for position in a joint venture with the Tendring Methodist Circuit who were also in need of a treasurer. By joining forces with Tendring for a finance officer to take responsibility for the separate day to day bookkeeping and budgeting for each circuit it was possible to secure the appointment of Alistair, who is a chartered accountant and a practising Christian. Alistair focusses his financial services and accountancy expertise on faith groups.

**ALL** the Methodist Churches in Colchester will be represented under one (canvas) roof at a free Family Fun Day in the city's lower Castle Park on 23<sup>rd</sup> September. Family games and activities will be on offer at the Circuit-run tent, giving an opportunity to meet new folk and show them what Colchester Methodists are all about. Volunteers are urgently needed to contact the organisers, Rev Paul and Keith to offer their support and help on this important day in the city's social calendar.

**THE** Circuit is now able to offer face to face training for those who have yet to complete online courses on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and an Introduction to Unconscious Bias, both of which are required training for members who have roles in leadership and worship in our churches.

Circuit steward Sally has already guided a group through EDI training at Wimpole Road, and a three-hour training session is now ready to be led by Sally and her fellow Circuit steward Judith, and local preachers' secretary Ron, on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> September at The Ark. Further information will be distributed to all churches in the coming days and weeks.

The second part of required training, an introduction to Unconscious Bias, will be led by Rev Paul in a two-hour session on 7<sup>th</sup> October at Wimpole Road.

Online training is still available to those who need to complete it and cannot attend the face-to-face sessions. Sally (Wimpole Road) and Judith (The Ark) are the people to contact for further details.

**GIFTS** from around the Circuit to the Easter Offering Appeal earlier this year totalled £1,161.55. Thanks to all those who contributed. Viv commented that although the Easter Offering Service is written at least a year in advance it again seemed very relevant to the current world situation and the needs that are calling out to be met.

**THE** current co-President of Methodist Women in Britain, Maggie, is a member of the Tendring Circuit. Please remember her in your prayers.

**NEWS:** from around the circuit:

### **From Lexden**

Services continue on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays of the month. We hold a short prayer service on Thursday mornings from 9:30am to which everyone is welcome. It would be lovely to see you if you would like to come.

### **From Castle**

ON Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> July, we joined our friends at St Botolph's Church for united morning worship. The service was taken by their new minister The Rev Chris Smith. His message and enthusiasm were appreciated by both congregations and we look forward to continuing and strengthening the links between our two churches in the future.

THE following Sunday Chris, our minister, confirmed Souzan and Raied before welcoming them along with Robin and Jenny into the Methodist Church family at Castle. Both couples have been worshipping with us for some time now, so it gives us all great joy to welcome them fully into Church life.

TWENTY-TWO members of our Church family along with two friends from St Botolph's Church enjoyed a picnic in Castle park. It was a wonderful two hours of fellowship and friendship in the afternoon sunshine behind the castle.

WE are very fortunate to have a junior church at Castle. For some time now we have been very conscious of the pressures placed on our young people as they enter senior school with all its demands, also the influence of their peers and the activities now available on Sundays. We are working with our Junior Church leaders to ensure we meet these challenges and support our young people on their Christian journey.

PREPARATIONS are now in place for the re-opening of our "Open House" on Wednesday mornings at Castle. We will be open to welcome friends old and new, from Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> September. We continue to look for ways in which we can support our local community and share God's love with those around us.

### **From The Ark**

THANKS largely to the generosity of gifts – from the members of the Tollgate Methodist Community who have joined the membership of the Ark, and those given in memory of our dear friends the late Bob and Roy – we have been able to upgrade our audio-visual equipment to take full advantage of the newer way of worship which we have been embracing since emerging from Covid lockdown, making the most of the many interesting musical videos which have been produced during and since lockdown, in order to supplement our usual and talented piano accompaniment.

Our regular pianist Liz was out of action for some weeks following an unfortunate incident with a vegetable knife from which she is now, thankfully, recovered. Thanks to the huge bank of musical videos now available we have not been without varied musical accompaniment at any of our services – and the new sound system now

installed, together with a computer-linked fixed monitor in place of a pull-down screen and projector, has made life for our technical team so much more enjoyable!

The upgrade has also meant that we no longer have trailing wires to a microphone and the new system is able to pick up and enhance the quietest of spoken word, which is of great benefit for the hard of hearing in the congregation.

THROUGHOUT the summer we have enjoyed a series of three garden parties (tea, coffee, cake and a really good chat) at members' homes and we have been blessed with good weather at each one. And we continue to enjoy regular fellowship with a Zoom coffee morning every Friday. All are welcome to this, by the way. Our friends from other churches in the circuit often pop in online for a chat and we were very pleased to spend some time recently catching up with Anne, a former preacher in this Circuit, from her new home.

AS the summer draws to a close we are continuing to explore new partnerships with organisations interested in using The Ark as a base for their much-needed community-interest activities in Highwoods.

### **From Wimpole Road**

AS August draws to a close, we look back on a very busy month at the beginning of the summer, in July.

On 13 July, we once again gathered together at Peter's home for the Church BBQ. As always, our grateful thanks go to Peter and Christine for their hospitality and delicious food.

Just a few days later, on 16 July, we said goodbye to Joe and Dave with Joe's final service at Wimpole Road in the morning and the Circuit Farewell Service in the evening, which also included recognition of Phil's 50 years as a Local Preacher! It was lovely to see so many at the evening service, including friends from all round the Circuit and the Boxted Methodist Silver Band. We wish Joe and Dave every happiness for the future and are so grateful for their time with us over the last 4 years.

Holiday Club ran from 24-28 July and the theme this year was 'Restoration Station'. This was once again a great success and the children learned about Jesus through crafts, stories, dancing and singing. I've had the songs in my head ever since!

Please note the forthcoming dates for your diary:

WE look forward to welcoming our new minister Rev Hannah Chun and her family. The Circuit Welcome Service will be at Wimpole Road on **Friday 1 September at 7.30 pm** and we do hope you will all be able to attend.

PLANS are progressing well for the Community Day on **Saturday 16 September 11:00 am - 3:00pm**. We will be joined once again by the Boxted Methodist Silver Band and there are lots of activities and attractions for all ages. As always, all offers of help would be gratefully received, especially in the Tea Tent! Please speak to Julie, Andrew or Edward if you are free and can spare some time to help in any way.

## **From The Well**

AS a result of our Mission Planning, we have recently started a fortnightly Prayer Time on a Tuesday morning before our Warm Welcome/Community Pantry sessions. We realise that not everyone is able to attend these Prayer Times, so a résumé of the prayer topics and thoughts from the time, are provided for the congregation.

WE frequently have some mums from Ghana with us on Tuesdays. They are Christians who enjoy singing and they have taught some of the helpers a few traditional Christian songs. They have formed themselves into a group called 'Grace and Glory' and it was a delight to have the group singing two of these songs during a recent Local Arrangement service – we look forward to more!

OUR Pastoral Group Leaders arranged an Afternoon Tea in July and everyone connected with The Well was invited. We arranged lifts and especially encouraged those who normally find it difficult to get to our services to come along. Whilst illness unfortunately prevented some from attending it was a very happy occasion which we would like to repeat.

AT the beginning of August, we held an Away Day in Dedham. It was an ideal venue and we enjoyed a great day of singing, prayer, thinking, quizzing and craft which closed with a celebration of the special birthday of one of our members. The theme for the day was 'Water' and it poured with rain the whole day long – God certainly has a sense of humour!

## **From Wivenhoe**

WE are currently going through a difficult time, with many of our members ill or infirm. As a result, we have needed new people to take on various roles within the Church, including hub coordinator, stewarding and lettings. Thankfully responses have been good and we are in the process of handing these duties over to those who volunteered.

WE joined with the other churches in Wivenhoe on Whitsunday to celebrate togetherness and renew our 'Churches Together in Wivenhoe' vows. We sadly said goodbye to Rev Joe Adams at his farewell service and were pleased to see local preacher Phil get his Long Service Preaching certificate for 50 years 'official' preaching service.

WE are looking forward to Rev Hannah Chun's arrival and will be celebrating that at her service on 1<sup>st</sup> September and will be joining with Phil 1<sup>st</sup> October to celebrate and give thanks for his preaching service, him having spent 50 years preaching in our circuit. He will be involving other preachers that he has mentored plus those just completing their accreditation in that service.

DESPITE our difficulties we have fulfilled the local arrangement planned in the last quarter and have welcomed new people into our congregation.

LADIES Fellowship, Knit and Natter and Bumps and Babies continue to provide a service to our wider community, as does our monthly Coffee Morning which is very popular.

WE have been particularly thankful for the help we have received recently from Rev Chris Preece and Circuit stewards Tony and Edward. We have been going through a very difficult time which has coincided with us being between Ministers. Chris, Tony and Edward have been very supportive to us at a time when they too have had much to do.

### **And cause for a special celebration....**

At Rev Joe Adams' Leaving Service I was delighted to be presented with a certificate in recognition of my 50 years as an Accredited Methodist Local Preacher. I was particularly appreciative of the amount of work that so many put into marking the occasion, especially Rev Chris Preece our Superintendent Minister. It was good to see so many of you there and to receive your kind words.

Those 50 years have all been spent in Wivenhoe and my preaching for all that time has been as part of the Colchester Circuit. However, my preaching has not been confined to the Colchester Circuit nor indeed Methodist Churches. As a result, I have a number of friends in churches outside of the Circuit.

I have also taken a very active part in the life of Wivenhoe throughout that time, not only ecumenically but more generally. For example, I was until recently chairman of Churches Together in Wivenhoe and for many years was Chairman of Wivenhoe Tennis Club.

My friends in the Boxted Methodist Silver Band regularly invited me to preach at their monthly Band Services, and I was interested to discover it was my uncle, Rev Bill Mann, who initiated these services when he joined the Circuit many years ago.

It has therefore long been my intention to celebrate this major milestone in my life with as many of my friends and family as possible, and to do so in Wivenhoe.

To this end I am planning a service of celebration and thanksgiving on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> October at 3pm. This will be held at St Mary's Anglican Church by kind permission of Rev Erwin Lammens and the PCC, it being a venue capable of holding well over 160 people. Needless to say music will be provided by the Boxted Methodist Silver Band.

Car parking will be available at various locations and further details will be provided nearer the time. I hope to see you there.

**Phil**

## From West Mersea

IT may have been a wet July but the celebrations at Mersea have gone on regardless of the weather - birthdays, wedding anniversaries, new grandchildren and even a new puppy.

OUR Church Anniversary was fun. On the Friday night we enjoyed a concert by a new local jazz group called Serendipity. Their leader Steve explained about the construction of jazz music and very soon we were all singing Amazing Grace, Abide with Me and When the Saints Go Marching to his jazz accompaniment. The tea and cakes weren't bad either!

REV Chris gave us an inspiring service on the Sunday morning. Mersea Church was opened in 1861 - are we therefore the oldest church in the circuit?

THE beach club had fun too, dodging the rain during their week. About 100 children attended, and activities switched from the beach to the island's churches to keep dry.

SOON it will be time for welcoming Rev Hannah, hot soup, warm jumpers and Harvest celebrations. Enjoy Autumn everyone.

## FROM THE CIRCUIT DIARY:

1 <sup>st</sup> Sept	Welcome Service for Rev Hannah Chun at Wimpole Road
5 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Leadership Meeting
9 <sup>th</sup> Sep	Monthly Circuit Prayer meeting at The Well
12 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Local Preachers and Worship Leaders Meeting
20 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Circuit Meeting
23 <sup>rd</sup> Sept	Free Family Fun Festival in Castle Park
14 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Monthly Circuit Prayer meeting at Castle
11 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Monthly Circuit Prayer meeting at Wimpole Road
16 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Leadership Meeting
27 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Local Preachers and Worship Leaders Meeting
5 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Circuit Meeting

Further information about the above and other events happening around the Circuit can be found on our Circuit website at [www.colchestermethodists.org.uk](http://www.colchestermethodists.org.uk)

## **DEADLINES!**

- *Please submit your Dec/Jan/Feb plan requests to our Circuit Administrator [colchestermethodist.office@gmail.com](mailto:colchestermethodist.office@gmail.com) by 10<sup>th</sup> October 2023*
- *The next newsletter will be distributed at the beginning of December so please send your church news direct to Judith or via our Circuit administrator at the above email address by 17<sup>th</sup> November 2023*