

S<sub>outh</sub> E<sub>ast</sub> D U<sub>rham</sub> M<sub>ethodist</sub>

# NEWSLETTER

for Bowburn, Shincliffe and  
Elvet Methodists

Sedum:  
a family of  
small plants  
with fleshy  
leaves,  
found on  
rock or bare  
ground.



“....I tell you  
Peter; you are  
a rock, and  
on this rock  
foundation I  
will build my  
church.....”

FEB. - MAR. 07

## *A letter from our Minister*

*Dear Friends,*

“Names and sects and parties fall; thou, O Christ, art all in all”, wrote Charles Wesley. If only that ideal were a reality! Despite the remarkable achievements of the Ecumenical Movement, denominationalism is still vigorous in Britain and many other parts of the world. We are Methodists, or we are Anglicans, or we are Baptists, or we have some other denominational label. The fact that we are all Christians is sometimes overlooked.

There are complex historical reasons for the separation of the Christian Church into denominations. Many of them no longer apply. And yet denominationalism is not wholly to be deplored. Each of the various churches has treasured and safeguarded valuable gifts. That is why, in all recent talks between churches, it has been emphasized that unity must not mean uniformity. Diversity, as well as unity, is given by God.

‘Sects and parties’, however, are not just a matter of denominations. One of the least happy characteristics of the modern Church is the ‘party spirit’ which can be found **within** many denominations. There are ‘evangelicals’ who are suspicious of ‘liberals’ and vice versa, and these are not the only such ‘parties’. Since no one has a monopoly of the truth, it is good that those with strong convictions are prepared to express them. It is not good, though, when that means that they do not respect the equal sincerity of those with different views, or when pressure groups are formed to scheme and mount campaigns within the Church. I have seen it happening, in Methodism and in other churches.

How its members can stay together as one in Christ while holding very different views on a range of subjects is a significant issue for the modern Church. Unless, with God’s help, we can achieve unity in diversity, we shall have little help to offer to a divided world.

Yours sincerely,

*Neil Dixon*

## **THE KEY**

January 28th was Homelessness Sunday with its theme of “No Home, No Justice”.

“Though we live in the fourth richest economy in the world, those who are homeless or badly housed see little justice. A home is much more than just a structure; it provides the foundation around which we build our lives. Many people in today’s society are unable to find a home that meets their needs.” Homelessness Sunday Resource Pack

Our own Jean Burnside works for the **South Tyneside Churches Key Project** helping young people live successful and independent lives. These are some of the amazingly practical things her organisation has done for homeless young people in 2006.

- Supported 19 vulnerable young people in their properties
- Provided equipment and childcare so an 18 year old with a young baby can train to be a hairdresser
- Run a decorating project for 18 year olds and under
- Helped a dyslexic go to university
- Given out over 100 Emergency Support Packs

I intend to run a series in this newsletter about homelessness. The Homelessness Sunday Resource Pack offers far more material than I can possibly include in one issue. Contributions from readers on the theme of homelessness would also be welcome.

Further information and a prayer can be found on Page 18.

## WORSHIP IN FEBRUARY

### Bowburn

- 4th 10.45 a.m. Mr W. Young  
11th 10.45 a.m. Holy Communion  
Rev Julie Lunn  
18th 10.45 a.m. Rev Julie Lunn  
25th 10.45 a.m. Mr R. Leach (First Sunday in Lent)

### Elvet

- 4th 10.45 a.m. Holy Communion  
Rev Neil Dixon  
6.00 p.m. Rev Neil Dixon  
11th 8.30 a.m. Holy Communion  
Rev Neil Dixon  
10.45 a.m. **All Age Worship and Parade**  
Rev Neil Dixon  
6.00 p.m. Rev Julie Lunn and Prof Ann Loades  
18th 10.45 a.m. Mr A Longe (WSC)  
6.00 p.m. Holy Communion  
Rev Julie Lunn  
25th 10.45 a.m. Miss Dorothy Hale (First Sunday in Lent)  
6.00 p.m. Mr R. Dodds (WSC)

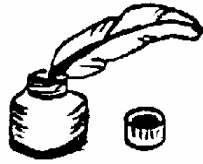
## WORSHIP IN MARCH

### Bowburn

- 4th 10.45 a.m. Mr A. Aspinall (Second Sunday in Lent)
- 11th 10.45 a.m. Holy Communion  
Rev K. Mankin (Third Sunday in Lent)
- 18th 10.45 a.m. **Mothering Sunday** All Age Worship  
Rev Julie Lunn (Fourth Sunday in Lent)
- 25th 10.45 a.m. Mr John Farish

### Elvet

- 4th 10.45 a.m. Holy Communion (Second Sunday in Lent)  
Rev Neil Dixon
- 11th 8.30 a.m. Holy Communion (Third Sunday in Lent)  
Rev Neil Dixon  
10.45 a.m. Prof Jimmy Dunn  
6.00 p.m. Rev Neil Dixon
- 18th 10.45 a.m. **Mothering Sunday** All Age Worship & Parade  
Mrs Anne Offler (Fourth Sunday in Lent)  
6.00 p.m. Holy Communion  
Rev Neil Dixon
- 25th 10.45 a.m. Rev Neil Dixon and Choir  
6.00 p.m. Rev Paul Wood



## EDITORIAL

Dear Friends,

I should like to celebrate hymn-singing in this letter. Don't you enjoy singing hymns? I do. Of course I realise that choirs (including our own) enhance worship with the beauty of their singing, but it's not the same as letting rip (or singing quietly and contemplatively) yourself.

I remember once trying to make my long-suffering friend Frances understand the wonders of "O For a Thousand Tongues To Sing". As I was singing unaccompanied and alone, I got the feeling she didn't quite see what the fuss was about. But you all know what I mean. It's just fantastic joining in, singing your part with gusto. I also recently read of the Christmas joy of Yorkshire people singing "While Shepherds Watched" to its "proper" tune, mistakenly known as "On Ilkley Moor". Personally, I adore the version with the "Sweet Chiming Christmas Bells" chorus.

There are lots of interesting things to read in this edition - thank you to all my contributors. I should especially like to draw your attention to the "Ethnographical Survey" (!) contributed by Augustine (Gus) one of the Chinese who were with us in the term before Christmas. I've written before about seeing ourselves as others see us. Please read Gus's work and think about it. I've had to edit it heavily but can print out the full original for anyone who would like it.

Yours in Christ,

*Jackie*

## **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN THE METHODIST CHURCH - YOUR VIEWS?**

Are there barriers in your church? Some barriers may be invisible to us but to others they may loom large and seem insurmountable. Barriers of all sorts can prevent people from being included in church life.

Maybe all of us, at some time, have felt excluded in church, be it physically or culturally. Some people experience exclusion because of their race, gender, disability, sexuality or their age. The Methodist Church believes that this is not acceptable and not what Jesus taught.

Alison Parker is the Church's equalities and diversity project officer and she wants to hear from you with your stories and experiences of exclusion and also to hear of how exclusion is turned to inclusion.

Alison is also organising a one-off event for people with a passion and commitment to seeking equality for disabled people within Methodism. Those attending will explore and devise action on how the Methodist Church can better support the ministry of disabled people, meet their spiritual needs, challenge discrimination and consider appropriate language. For more information, please contact Alison:

Alison Parker, equalities & diversity project officer, c/o Lancaster Methodist Church, Scotforth Road, Lancaster LA1 4SE. Telephone 01524 60409

email: <mailto:equalitiesanddiversitymeth@fsmailnet>

<http://www.methodist.org.uk>

BAPTISMS

We have celebrated Christ's love for the following children,  
and welcomed them into the Church community by Baptism.

- 26 November    Cerys Elizabeth HOLDING        )  
                      Rhiannon May HOLDING        ) Elvet  
                      Ryan Christopher JACKSON        )  
28 November    Skye Kelsey HUTCHINSON        Bowburn

We have also had a Blessing for

- 28 November    Charlie Jude WHITFIELD        Bowburn

*Welcome.*



WEDDINGS

The following couples have celebrated their marriages at Elvet.

- 4 November    George Finney and Susan Wilson  
                      Steven Montgomery and Lisa Stavers

*Congratulations*



FUNERALS

**In Memoriam**

Our loving sympathy is extended to the family and friends of

Freda Watkin

whose funeral service was held at Elvet on 29 November

Bob Bellis

whose funeral service was held at Bowburn on 19 December  
and

Mary Morris

whose funeral service was held at Elvet on 17 January

### **EVANGELISM - with shoe leather From Saltash circuit**

We've repeated the walk around the Circuit we first did last year. Over a period of 5 days we linked together the various Chapels by visiting each one and holding a short service and a time of fellowship with those that could attend from each congregation. We talked with people along the road. We may never know the outcome of passing the time of day with strangers, but for those taking part it was about relaxing in God's and other people's company. We recommend it; it uplifts the spirit, if not the feet!

E-mail contact: <mailto:keith@brandizepark.fsnet.co.uk>

Phone contact: Keith Mutton 01579 382334

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### **THOUGHTS UPON SLAVERY**

John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Church, was well known as an opponent of slavery. In his then controversial tract, Thoughts Upon Slavery, published in 1774, John challenged the evils of slavery and called for the abolition of the Slave Trade Act.

To mark the bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act in 2007, Thoughts Upon Slavery has been reproduced, with additional material, links to resources and information on the Set All Free campaign which aims to combat modern forms of slavery

Thoughts Upon Slavery is available from MPH at £3.50. A set of seven posters is also available at £5 per set from the Racial Justice Office, Methodist Church House, London NW1 5JR. email: [Racial-Justice@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:Racial-Justice@methodistchurch.org.uk)

See also the Set All Free website <http://www.setallfree.net>

The Women's Network of the Methodist Church has chosen to focus on modern-day slavery for its 2005 -2008 Social Action Project

For more on how you can take action on the trafficking of women and girls in Europe see

<http://www.methodist.org.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=information.content&cmid=1257>



**How people behave in Elvet Methodist Church  
on Sunday Morning**

**by Augustine Vernon Cheng**

In the United Kingdom, which is categorized as a Christian country, churches are everywhere. Being a Christian from Hong Kong, I am eager to know more about British churches. This project provides me with a valuable and rare chance to experience and investigate how people behave in the churches in British culture. The church I have chosen to investigate is Elvet Methodist church.

It seems that there are 200 registered congregation members in this church. However, the Sunday morning attendance rate is around 100 people on average. The reason why only half of the registered congregation members attend every Sunday is still a mystery waiting to be solved. However, the attendance rate is usually higher for the first Sunday in every month as there is Holy Communion. The number of adults and children will also increase significantly in the weeks where a child baptism takes place. Furthermore, Elvet Methodist Church is currently supporting a charity project called 'Opening Doors'. Whenever there is any promotion/reporting event for this project on or after certain Sunday services, people in charge and those who have decided to help/support this project will most probably attend that Sunday's services.

**In terms of general personality, the people in the church are friendly, nice, easily approachable and very helpful.** If there is a newcomer in the church, several people will usually approach, welcome him/her and have a brief chat.

I discovered that Rota systems are widely applied in supporting the functioning of the Sunday service. Those who have volunteered to help will be on the Rota system. Their behaviour and plan will then be worked out according to the Rota. For example, if someone is on duty for welcoming people or reading the Bible, s/he

will arrive much earlier and will dress more formally etc. Those who need to do all sorts of preparation work for the service or the tea session afterwards usually arrive at 10:00a.m. Stewards have their own Rota for their special duties such as vestry.

The worship service is greatly schedule-based. People pray, sing hymns and listen to the reading of the Bible and the sermon. The most interesting finding is that there are implicit unanimous norms for standing and sitting. People settle quickly and do individual things/tasks before the service so as to preserve tranquillity for the worship, whereas people chat very freely and rather loudly afterwards everywhere in the worship area. When worship is finished, around 1/3 of the people will go to other places immediately. Another 1/3 will usually stay in the back seats and the aisles in the worship area and chat. The remaining 1/3 will go straight to the tea/coffee session and chat. The tea/coffee session is obviously a very cultural arrangement. After the service, people usually chat very freely in groups of 2 – 3. A lot of interactions between people take place after the Sunday service.

Here is an interesting finding. It is quite a mystery for me to understand why the majority of the people tend to sit at the back. The only related information I have acquired is that people usually sit according to their habit. One interviewee answered that he has sat at the back of the left hand side in the church for 50 years. This may possibly explain why people tend to sit at the back. As newcomers usually do not want to get very involved in a social group too quickly, they tend to sit at the back. Once this practice has become a habit, people will sit at the back all the time. This seems to be a plausible explanation for this phenomenon.

**I really hope that after studying the report of this project, people, especially newcomers, will find it easier to get along with the established explicit and implicit norms and rules of this church so that they get used to the church very quickly and spare more time to think about the truthfulness of the faith of Christianity in the church.**

**Samaritans Purse ( International Relief) Operation  
Christmas Child**

**Through an organiser in Shincliffe, Bowburn Church became involved with *Samaritan's Purse*. Members and Drop-In participants contributed to the shoe-box appeal this year. The following is a note of thanks, which has been received.**

*Samaritan's Purse ( International Relief) Operation Christmas Child*

A big thank you to everyone who generously prepared many shoe boxes. These will be much appreciated by the children who may not have ever received a Christmas present before or it may be the only present they receive this year.

The boxes are sent across Eastern Europe and Africa; Operation Christmas Child sends a message of hope to children living in desperate situations and on behalf of the children thank you very much.

*Hazel Davis*

**SPLASH OUT FOR CHILDREN**

A sponsored swim in aid of **NCH**, the Children's charity, is to be held at Durham City Pool on **Saturday 10th February 2007** from 4.30 pm until 5.30 pm .

People of all ages can take part and, if you can swim 2 lengths or many more, join us in this special event - application forms available from Sheila Coltman, telephone 0191 3883161 or email [sheila.coltman@nch.org.uk](mailto:sheila.coltman@nch.org.uk).

Entry is free but swimmers are asked to raise as much money as possible for the charity with sponsorship from family and friends. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

## CHILDREN WANT 24/7 CHURCH



An online survey conducted by Methodist Children has found that children prefer to participate in the fun, fellowship and community offered by churches during the week and in summer holidays than on Sundays.

Steve Pearce, Children's Secretary, says; "Midweek groups are almost 100% bigger than Sunday groups. Many churches are doing great work on Sundays, but it's clear from our results that children want church to be more than just that - they want to go to activities during the week. Which is great, because 43% of the churches that work with children already provide mid-week activities, with an average of 38 children attending each group."

"Sundays are special, but we're called to be Christians every day of the week and this survey shows that children and young people have a 24/7 spirituality that needs to be fed all the time. We are already doing this in a variety of ways through services such as the Methodist Children website and free weekly texting service. We are also involved in various online church projects for those of all ages, but there's always more room for growth."

Doug Swanney, Children's Work Development Officer, added; "The most significant finding of the survey is that when churches do something new, it usually works. Churches need to be ready to take the risk of trying new things - they might just surprise themselves with how successful they are."

The results of the survey are available online at <http://www.methodistchildren.org.uk/adults/audit.htm>

*NEWS FROM THE PEWS*

**The Dundee Family**, Gordon, Janelle, Gillian and Alistair, wish to thank everyone who expressed their sympathy and sent cards, etc following the recent death of Janelle's mother in Northern Ireland.

The words of comfort and support made a very difficult time more bearable and are much appreciated.

**Doris Ramsden** appreciated the kind messages and birthday cards she received on her eightieth birthday.

**A reader who has been following Judy Morrison's contributions from Tonga has submitted the following from Reuters. As Judy feared, democracy is a difficult attainment for the Tongans.**

*The first commercial flights in five days landed in Tonga as Australian and New Zealand forces patrolled the main airport and tourists and foreign citizens made plans to leave the capital, Nuku'alofa.*

*Airlines cancelled regular flights to Tonga last week after rioters looted and torched buildings in the centre of the capital, leaving up to eight people dead. Australia and New Zealand sent in about 150 troops and police to help restore order.*

*The riots began after parliament went into recess for the year without voting on democratic reforms to Tonga's semi-feudal political system.*

*Last Thursday the government bowed to the protesters and agreed to new elections in 2008 in which a majority of parliament would be directly elected by popular vote. At present, nobles and appointed MPs outnumber elected representatives.*

**"Oh, yes it was!"  
(Elvet pantomime 2006)**

Review by Jackie Fielding

Young and old joined together to perform Walton Straus's\* special Elvet version of the pantomime "Cinderella". They played to packed houses and the money raised was all donated to this year's project "Opening Doors" which aims to help young homeless people who are trying to turn their backs on drugs in the Seaham area.

It was hard to know if the actors or the audience were having the most fun. I had the joy of taking two of our visitors from Hong Kong to enjoy this thoroughly British cultural experience - and they did! They leaned forward and laughed heartily, for everything was new for them.

Those of us who are familiar with the genre, enjoyed jokes, songs, joining in (oh, yes we did) as well as new twists to a well-known plot. Our thanks to Christine Higham for producing and directing this delight and to all hard-working cast members and backstage crew (too numerous to mention) for enabling us to start our Christmas celebrations so happily.

A programme note reminded us that "The story of Cinderella is a story of love and forgiveness and that is what Christmas is all about". Let us keep the Christmas spirit throughout the year.

Stuart Lawson, Chair of the CCM committee promises us "Aladdin" next year and invites all who wish to take part to contact him.

\* Although I read English Literature at University, I unfortunately never had the opportunity to study the *œuvre* of Walton Staus. Would that someone could write a PhD on this sadly neglected author.

## **WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT POVERTY?**

MRDF have produced a six-session study pack for small groups, ideal for Lent.

It features challenging Bible studies for small groups including

- \* Bible readings
- \* Discussion questions
- \* Prayers
- \* Practical ways to respond

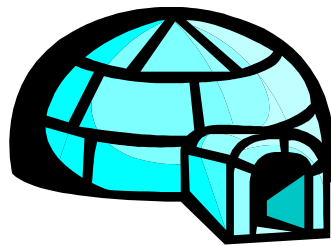
The study packs are free: order one copy for each member of your group from MRDF:

Tel: 020 7467 5132

e-mail: <mailto:mrdf@methodistchurch.org.uk>

MRDF, 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR.

The Study Pack is also downloadable from [http://www.mrdf.org.uk/pages/bible\\_study\\_pack.php](http://www.mrdf.org.uk/pages/bible_study_pack.php)



What did the Minister say at the end of the Eskimo wedding?

“You may now touch noses.”



**CRADLE ROLL BIRTHDAYS**

**FEBRUARY**

- 2nd Ryan Jackson (Elvet)
- 9th Helena Ruby Davison (Bowburn)
- 10th Kyle Caiden Corner (Bowburn)
- 14th Emily Leask (Elvet)

- MARCH**
- 9th Zoë Marr Wilkinson (Bowburn)
  - 11th George William Hurton (Bowburn)
  - 24th Georgia Hunter (Elvet)

**JUNIOR CHURCH BIRTHDAYS**

**FEBRUARY**

- 25th Charlotte Black (Bowburn)

**MARCH**

- 4th Lisa Cave (Elvet)
- 8th Emma Dunn (Shincliffe)
- 15th Shadrach Oni (Elvet)
- 24th Ella Rose Ferguson (Bowburn)
- 25th Rebecca Carter (Elvet)
- 26th Emma Blacklock (Shincliffe)

*A Happy Birthday To You All*

## HOMELESSNESS

### A Short Note on 'Living Simply'

'God calls to look at our lifestyles and to choose to live simply, sustainably and in solidarity with the poor. In this way we can help create a world in which human dignity is respected and everyone can reach their potential.'

This year young people across the country are going to be challenged to see how they can 'Live Simply'. as individuals and as a group. Start to work out how you might be able to live simply. What sort of impact can you have? Think about the environment, think of fair trade, think of voluntary work, think of fund raising. Keep it simple, change your life and change the world!

### An extra note from the Editor

I hope none of you will choose to ignore this on the grounds that you are not young. You are as young as you feel.

### PRAYER

God of Justice

Have mercy on those who sleep ...

on the streets or in hostels,

on the floor or on a sofa,

in store rooms or offices,

and those who know their friends' hospitality is at breaking point.

Help us to build a fairer society,

where having no home does not exclude anyone from work and health and respect.

Help us to build a society where all may 'dwell in safety'.

In the name of the homeless Saviour Jesus,

**Amen**

**THE WEEK IN BOWBURN AND SHINCLIFFE**

Sundays	9.30 am	* Sunday Club (Shincliffe)
	<b>10.45 am</b>	<b>Morning Worship</b> (Bowburn)
Tuesdays	5.30 pm	* Kid's Club (Bowburn)
Wednesdays	2.00 pm	Women's Fellowship (Bowburn) (1st and 2nd in month only)
	<b>2 - 3 pm</b>	Prayer & Fellowship Meeting (Bowburn), <b>last Weds of month.</b>
Thursdays	9.00 am	* "Drop-in" (Bowburn) * <i>term-time only</i>

**THE WEEK AT ELVET**

Sun	8.30 a.m.	Second Sunday, Holy Communion
	<b>10.45 a.m.</b>	<b>Morning Service &amp; Junior Church</b> , including crèche
	<b>6.00 p.m.</b>	<b>Evening Worship</b>
	7.30 p.m.	MethSoc (term-time)
Mon	2.00 p.m.	Prayer Meeting (2nd & 4th Mon)
	5.45 p.m.	Brownies (Open Group) [7-10]
	6.00 p.m.	Cubs (Open Group) [Boys 8-10½]
	7.30 p.m.	Guides (Open Group) [10-16] <b>meets at St Giles'</b>
	7.30 p.m.	Explorers (Open Group) [14½-18]
	7.45 p.m.	Housegroup at Newton Hall (alternate wks)
Tue	10.00 a.m.	City House Group (alternate wks)
	5.30 p.m.	Beavers (Open Group) [6-8]
	7.15 p.m.	Scouts (Open Group) [10½-14½]
	8.00 p.m.	Housegroup at Gilesgate (alternate weeks)
Wed	2.30 p.m.	Women's Fellowship (1st & 3rd wks)
Thurs	10.00 a.m.	Arts & Crafts Workshop
	7.45 p.m.	Thursday Club for All (alternate wks)
	7.45 p.m.	Housegroup at Shincliffe (alternate wks)

**ELVET and BOWBURN METHODIST CHURCHES**

**Ministers:**

Rev Neil Dixon BA MPhil

Tel: 384 8755

and

Rev Julie Lunn, BEd, MA

Tel: 377 8089

**DON'T FORGET**

Copy for the **April - May** Newsletter  
should reach Jackie Fielding  by

**4th March,**

via the pocket in the rear entrance hall at **Elvet,**

by phone on Durham 384 7305

or by e-mail at [fielding@durhamcity.org.uk](mailto:fielding@durhamcity.org.uk)

Alternatively, those at **Shincliffe** can contact

Jim Harper on Durham 386 4360.

Those at **Bowburn** can contact

Liz Atkinson on Durham 377 0687.