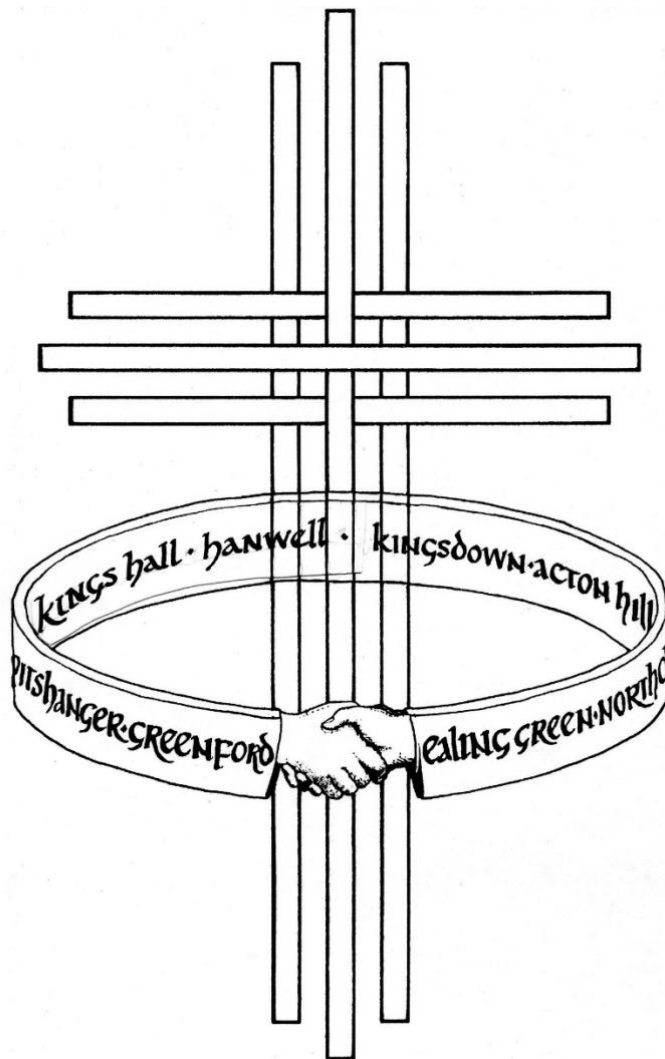


# In-touch

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No 102

June - August 2024



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The magazine for *all* the Ealing Trinity Circuit.

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**Circuit website: [www.ealingtrinity.org.uk](http://www.ealingtrinity.org.uk)**

*Front Cover designed by Marion Narain*

## From the Superintendent

Dear friends,

I can't believe that it's 10 years since I arrived in the circuit from just down the road in Hammersmith and Fulham. The time seems to have flown by and yet so much has happened. I've served you as minister in Kingsdown, Pitshanger, Kings Hall, Greenford and Northolt churches as well as being your superintendent.

Together we have sought God's vision for the future of our churches, wondered about how to work more closely together and how to make ends meet. We've battled to attempt to redevelop the Kings Hall site (I continue to pray for that to come to fruition as I leave). We've welcomed people and also wished them well as they've left. I've had the privilege of celebrating weddings and baptisms, as well as mourning with you as we've shared in the funerals of those who we've loved.

We've also faced unprecedented times together. When COVID brought challenges, risk and lockdown I was grateful for the wisdom of you all as we sought ways to continue our life together in faith. I have vivid memories of the early online Bible Studies and the amazing depth of faith and life experience that was gathered on screens. Those Thursday afternoons were an amazing blessing to me, full of life, of laughter and of deep thought and penetrating questions. Worship on video and online gave the chance to explore what was important and fundamental, and to find new ways of expressing it, and I was and am grateful for all your support and care as we did so.

In the years since we have continued to reflect on how we work together as a circuit. Churches have experimented with new mission projects, some of which are thriving and causing fresh thought and developments. Circuit Services and events are beginning to gain momentum once again. Our circuit stewards are doing an amazing job in developing strategy and practices that support and enable our life together. In the last few months we've added a new circuit steward as Karen Whitehouse has joined their ranks. The Circuit Meeting had a vision of a circuit steward from each church. The Methodist website has information on the role of circuit

stewards. Might you be called to this or can you think of someone from your church who would be good in this role?

As I leave, I take with me more memories than I can name, and a greater sense of gratitude to you all and to God than I can put into words. On the 21<sup>st</sup> July we will have a chance to say goodbye to each other as we meet at Greenford for a service, meal and barn dance. I will be sad to leave you all, but I do so knowing that God is calling me to ministry in the Southampton District, a calling that is both exciting and daunting. My welcome service is at Salisbury Central Methodist Church on the afternoon of 1<sup>st</sup> September. I would love to see some familiar faces there and will be grateful of your prayers in the months to come.

As I leave, I do so praying for your future mission and ministry and for all that will change and develop as you move forward with Rev Steve Day.

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you,  
wherever He may send you.


May He guide you through the wilderness,  
protect you through the storm.

May He bring you home rejoicing  
at the wonders He has shown you.

May He bring you home rejoicing  
once again into your door.

With love, overflowing thanks and deep prayers,

Rachel



You are invited to

**Ealing Trinity Circuit  
End of Year Celebration,  
Awards Ceremony**

&

**Farewell for  
Rev'd Rachel Bending**

**Sunday 21st July**

**4.30pm Worship**

**6pm Meal**

**7pm Barn Dance**

**Greenford Methodist Church**

RSVP to

[office@ealingtrinity.org.uk](mailto:office@ealingtrinity.org.uk)

## Rev Stephen Day

As Rachel leaves the circuit for pastures new and we look back with thanks over her time with us, we also look forward to a new chapter in the life of Ealing Trinity Circuit. Rev Stephen Day will join us in September from the Croydon Circuit, where he and his wife, Rev Jane Day, have been based since 2019. The move across London is a relatively short one for Stephen and Jane, who served as mission partners with the Methodist Church Southern Africa between 2013 and 2019, in the city of Germiston near Johannesburg. While in Africa Stephen was a minister of Germiston Central Methodist Church and Jane was involved in issues of gender justice, leadership development and theological education. A service of welcome for Rev Steve will be held in early September – details below.

You are invited to

A Service of Welcome for the  
**Rev'd Stephen Day**

as

**Superintendent Minister,**

of the

**Ealing Trinity Methodist Circuit**

on

**Sunday 8th September 2024**

at

**5pm**

at

**Ealing Green Methodist Church**

RSVP

[office@ealingtrinity.org.uk](mailto:office@ealingtrinity.org.uk)

## **From the Circuit Meeting**

The most recent Circuit Meeting was held on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2024 at Northolt.

The meeting began with attendees being asked to bring something their church is celebrating, and then sharing the prayer needs of their churches and communities. Notable celebrations included new members at Ealing Green, successful building repairs at Acton Hill, and significant birthdays at Northolt and Greenford.

As readers of *In-touch* will know it is a time of change in the circuit, with Rev Steve Day replacing Rev Rachel Bending as Superintendent Minister, and Gerald Barton, the Circuit Administrator and editor of *In-touch* for some 20 years, handing the baton to our new Circuit Manager, Andy Brierley. The meeting gave thanks for Gerald as he retires, and there will be a chance to thank him and pray for his ministry at the Circuit Service in July.

The membership of the meeting remains unchanged, but the Circuit is keen for more volunteers to join Marcia Pinnock-Roye as a synod rep. Acting as a rep for the circuit offers a chance to meet people across London, and to hear what other circuits are doing. It also helps with discipleship and in getting an overview of what is happening in the wider Church.

### **Property Developments**

A proposal has been made to lease the Pitshanger building to West London University's Drama School, on a 5-year lease. A special meeting will be held in October to discuss this and the wider long-term strategy for the building, which the meeting voted to no longer class as a worshipping space.

The current proposal for Kings Hall, following the termination of the Pocket Living scheme, involves the creation of a worship space out of the dome, a café space and up to eight storeys of residential flats, which the Circuit would own and rent out. The aim is to keep the façade and some of the structure behind it, including the walls which were the vestry and office. The next step is to appoint a land agent and take steps to go on the open market.

## Safeguarding and EDI

The Circuit continues its focus on safeguarding training to support church officers and Circuit stewards in their roles. A number of church members have completed the advanced training, either in person or online. Those who need to or would like to complete the training can register online at <https://www.methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/methodist-safeguarding-training/>. Paul Williams, the Circuit Safeguarding Officer, has attended the 'Training the Trainers' course, and the Circuit is looking for another trainer so we can deliver foundation level safeguarding training in our Circuit.

Rev Rachel Bending re-emphasised the importance of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Training, which is mandatory and legally required for the following office holders:

All ministers (including Superintendents and District Chairs)

Local Preachers

Connexional Committee members

Connexional Team members

Circuit and District Safeguarding Officers

Circuit stewards and church stewards

Lay Workers (Lay Pastoral Workers; Children, Youth and Family Workers; Pioneers; Worship Leaders)

The Methodist Conference in 2021 agreed that those in key roles in the church should undertake some mandatory EDI training, but the hope is that many others will also choose to do it, because equality, diversity and inclusion are not just legal requirements but vital to our discipleship, ministry and mission.

Details can be found on the Methodist Church website, under 'The Inclusive Methodist Church'. There is a video on the webpage that explains what the training involves, and how to register. The module is held online.

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## **A Methodist View on the General Election**

*Revd Gill Newton and Deacon Kerry Scarlett, President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference*

Our hope is that this will be an election campaign where people will be able to discuss and disagree with kindness, where truth will be upheld, and where the needs of people who are vulnerable will be honoured. As Christians, over the weeks ahead we are called to participate actively, ask questions, listen well, seek justice and the common good, and surround the process in prayer.

There will be all kinds of issues on the agenda during this campaign. But as we seek to follow Jesus's commandment to love our neighbour, we particularly challenge all who aspire to form the next government to set out what they will do to tackle poverty in the UK.

But poverty is not inevitable, and those with power can make choices that could end poverty for good. We urge all those who seek our votes to commit to make poverty a priority.

Finally, we encourage people to use their votes, and to ensure others can too. Voting is a hard-fought privilege still denied to many around the world. Churches will be active in ensuring everyone eligible is registered to vote and has appropriate photo ID, so that they are not denied the opportunity to participate in the democratic process. We should all be able to have our voices heard during this election, and to join in making choices that will shape the future of our society.

*Article originally published on the Methodist Church website.*

## **A Prayer on the announcement of a General Election**

Loving God,

Now that an election has been called, hear my prayers for our country and the campaign ahead.

I pray for those who are standing for election, for their safety, and for their willingness to listen and to speak.

I pray for truthfulness and kindness to prevail as the issues are debated.

I pray that each of us will be inspired to use our voice and our vote for your goodness and glory.

Inspire me, God, to Love, to Pray and to Vote.

Amen.

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# **Christianity and Football – a History**

As football fever grips the nation before the 2024 Euros, what role has the Church played in the history of the beautiful game?

## **In the beginning**

It all started with the Sunday School movement. With as many as 85% of children attending Sunday School in the latter part of the 19th century, the Church was in constant dialogue with the community that surrounded it. Britain was, in the estimate of many, the most religious nation in the world at that time.

Outside of the context of Sunday, the Church was the main provider of activity for children and young people, whose numbers in society were at record levels. As people moved from an agriculture-based existence towards living in the most basic of accommodation in large cities, they often sought solace in a 'third place'. That was usually the public house.

In reaction, vicars, priests and ministers pioneered new sporting diversions to save young people from earthly temptations. These Church leaders were deeply averse to the idea of sport on Sunday, and had a very distinct temperance agenda. With the advent of the 5½-day week, Saturday afternoon drunkenness was becoming a problem, and the 3pm kick-off was partly a result of the desire of church leaders to keep men from spending an afternoon drinking their wages away. Christianised sportsmanship, with its emphasis on bravery, modesty, forbearance and friendship, enabled sports like football to emerge as national pastimes.

## **A growing influence**

Christians were able to influence these decisions because as organised football grew throughout the 1860s and 1870s, as many as 25% of all the teams playing in a league would have some form of church affiliation. It was this church-based group of teams which took the initiative to form the Football League in 1886. Tired of friendlies against inferior local opposition and the occasional thrill of the cup, William McGregor of the Aston Villa (Wesleyan) Football Club decided to see if there was interest in a league structure. Ten of

the other teams joining Villa during that first decade of the league were church affiliated, with Methodists and Anglicans at the fore.

Many of the church teams had grown out of cricket teams. The Aston Villa Wesleyan Chapel had more than 300 children in its Sunday School, and a significant number of young men in a Bible class especially for them. Six young men from this Bible class started a mission in nearby Portchester Street that grew from 12 members in 1878 to nearly 1,200 by 1888. One of the founders, HS Yoxall, found large numbers of young men playing football on Sundays. He persuaded them to come to Bible class and provided a field for them to play on, on Saturdays. Then he discovered that they were using the changing rooms for drinking on non-match days. Undaunted, he joined the team in order to keep an eye on them, but so impressed them with his skill that they eventually came to trust him, joined the Bible class and gave up drinking.

As this distinctive mission work went on, the Aston Villa (Wesleyan) Football Club was gathering pace and grew from its humble beginnings in 1874 to the point where they won the FA Cup in 1887. McGregor had worked hard to curb the drinking of team members, and called a team meeting every Monday in a local coffee shop to help the players discover other social outlets.

### **On a mission**

Again and again as you study the origins of many of the leading clubs in the land, you discover that the church that sponsored a team was itself a 'mission' church planted out as the cities and towns grew at breakneck speed. The formation of a football team was part of a commitment to every aspect of the life of the local community.

William Baker Pitt, who started the process that gave us Swindon Town, was noted as a champion of the poor. In the early years, their star player and England international was Harold Fleming. He was famous for refusing to play on Good Friday and for his unwavering sportsmanship. He was also a key youth worker in his church.

With many of the players in their mid to late teens, football was a place to learn about teamwork, responsibility and administration. John Henry Cardwell, the vicar of St Andrews in Fulham, turned to the then 15-year-old

Tom Norman to recruit the players for what became Fulham FC. Over the years, teachers from the Bible classes – and one very able local vicar – stepped out for Fulham

Cardwell believed that the Church often ‘drove the children from our doors’ when they were young, and was determined to reverse the trend. He also felt that people needed to belong before they believed, and was wary of ‘aggressive propaganda’, preferring a policy of ‘making friends first and converts after’. The church fed as many as 160 children daily with free hot dinners. He was joined in his endeavours with the football team by Peregrine Propert, who had been deeply affected by the witness of cricketing legend CT Studd and his friends in the Cambridge Seven. He turned his back on a career in law and politics, and instead came to work in a new mission church in the Fulham area, St Augustine’s.

The church opened a gym, and the genial manner, genuine friendship and sporting abilities of Propert soon won him respect among those whose foul language, unkempt appearance and lack of education was an offence to more class-conscious churchgoers. Propert had to defend himself against those who told the Bishop of London that he ‘was not fit to be a clergyman’. Propert told the bishop that he believed in applied religion, and that he stood by the precedent set by Jesus who said that he ‘came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance’ (Matthew 9:13, KJV).

Some saw themselves as being in a battle, with football being one of the social institutions that could build community and help the Church find a voice among the local people. Basil Wilberforce, grandson of the anti-slavery campaigner, was determined to ‘plunge into God’s battle’. He started night schools, soup kitchens, clubs for young men and young mothers, and gave his approval to a project of one of his curates – St Mary’s Association Football Club. The team that was to become Southampton FC were keen to aid the ‘spiritual life’ without ‘omitting the many exercises of the physical life’.

Two other teams founded as part of a response to great social need, and because the people involved wanted to enable people to hear the message of ‘Christ, and him crucified’, were Barnsley and Manchester City. Vicar’s daughter Anna Connell started a men’s club as one of her and her father’s many projects at St Mark’s in West Gorton. The area knew great poverty and violence, with organised fights involving up to 500 young men – a practice

known as 'scuttling'. Soon 100 men were attending the men's club, and a football team was formed to help 'deepen the bonds' between them. The first match in 1880 for the team that would become Manchester City was against Macclesfield Baptist.

St Peter's in Barnsley was a socially innovative church, and deeply involved in the education of the poor and advocacy on their behalf. Their new vicar, Tiverton Preedy, was keen to be involved in sports and to get to know local people, so he joined a local rugby club. He walked out after a while when he discovered they were going to play on Good Friday. Making his way home after this disquieting revelation, he chanced upon a group of young men outside a pub talking about forming a football team.

From that conversation, and despite the disapproval of those who felt that football was a poor man's game, Tiverton persevered in his quest for sports that would through 'manliness and fair play' be a 'force for moral good in the education of young people'. Barnsley St Peter's Football Club would later become the Barnsley FC we know today.

### **Sobering up society**

Facing the challenge of heavy drinking in society was never far from the early 'sports friendly' minister's mind. One largescale response was the building of model communities that had adequate housing and proper local facilities. Several of these projects sprung up around London, including the Queens Park estate in West London. Tenants found drunk could be evicted from the estate!

Churches were aware that they should seek to provide social and cultural alternatives for those they were calling away from the public house door. St Jude's Institute on the estate provided a range of activities, and soon had a football team. Following an amalgamation with another local team, Christ Church Rangers, a compromise name was needed. The suggestion from their curate and centre forward – Queens Park Rangers – won the day. Teetotal Everton players and officials also helped provoke the formation of Liverpool FC. Everton was rooted in the St Domingo Methodist Chapel. The chapel influenced the club and the Football League until the Second World War. The Liverpool split was precipitated when an early patron of the club, John Houlding, a local brewer, sought to raise the rent of the ground,

amongst other things. A St Domingo member and key figure in the club, George Mahon, challenged him at a 500-strong club meeting, and carried the day with all but a handful of the crowd. A disgusted Houlding formed a new club, Liverpool FC, using Everton's old ground at Anfield.

Tottenham Hotspur grew out of the young men's Bible class at All Hallows. John Ripsher, their Bible class teacher, protected them when the wrath of the church fell on them for card playing during church services. He also actively sought out social space where they could read, play games and relax in an alcohol free context on week nights.

So, as some of you immerse yourself in the forthcoming feast of football, perhaps you might like to ponder what the Church's role in the roots of the game says to us about identification with the poor, the Church as a community hub, male spirituality, and the discipleship impact of the pastor/leader who participates in the mundane life of his or her community.

*Article adapted from one originally published on the Premier Christianity website.*

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## **A Methodist Garden at the RHS Flower Show, Tatton Park**

'This Garden Isn't Finished Without You,' illustrates some of the values that are important to the Methodist Church. Each plant in the garden represents a person and signifies that, like plants, every individual is beautiful just the way they are. Globe Artichoke from the Mediterranean, Red leaved Rose from mainland Europe, Fig from the Middle East, Silky-Spike Melic from North Africa and Yellow Coneflower from North America will be planted together to display the harmony in diversity.

Holly Adams, Evangelism and Contemporary Culture Officer at the Methodist Church says, "We want to be a church that gets out and about, beyond the walls of our buildings, meeting people in the places where they gather and being good news. When Ollie approached us to explore creating a garden together it seemed like a no-brainer. We're really proud of our commitment to inclusion and diversity – a commitment that is deeply rooted in our faith in a God who loves all of us unconditionally. The show allows us to express that commitment in a beautiful, creative way."

The garden was designed by Ollie Pike from Pike Studio who was awarded a Silver Medal in the RHS Young Designer of the Year Competition with the Bible Society: Psalm 27 Garden in 2023. The reaction to the garden hit home the power that gardens and plants can have.

For 'This Garden Isn't Finished Without You', Ollie was inspired by "The amazing communities found in Methodist Church's across the UK. This was the foundation of the whole garden. Inspired by the typical floorplan of a Methodist Church, the layout is abstracted to create a beautiful communal space. To the planting which has diversity from across the world and most beautiful when combined together as a community."

The design focuses on sustainability and climate resilience to match the Methodist Church's ambitious environmental aims. The garden will feature climate resilient drought-tolerant planting along with sustainable materials, such as a cork-clad wall, recycled colourful stone paving and willow sculptures.

The garden aims to be net zero by 2030 by sequestering more carbon than it has produced. The use of vibrant climate-resilient plants and net zero regenerative materials shows that there is a bright future for sustainable and mindful gardening.





Revd Alan Bradley, Superintendent Minister comments, “We have a great team of 30 volunteers from Knutsford Methodist Church who will be helping to host the Methodist garden. We have many keen gardeners within the church and many who want to share the good news of God’s love for everyone. The garden reflects one of our core values that God’s love embraces all.”

The garden will be relocated to nearby Mobberley Methodist Church (reducing its carbon footprint) and will become a wellbeing space for anyone to visit after the festival. Here the garden will achieve net zero by 2030 when it will have absorbed more carbon than its creation produced.

*‘This Garden Isn’t Finished Without You’ will be open to the public from 17 to 21 July 2024. The garden illustrates the Methodist Church in Great Britain’s commitment to diversity, inclusion and sustainability.*

*Article originally published on the Methodist Church website.*

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# Greenford Methodist Church

## 99<sup>th</sup> *Anniversary Celebration*

Saturday **15<sup>th</sup>** June  
10.30am - 1pm  
Anniversary Mini market  
Health check-up and  
Food Packs distribution

Sunday **16<sup>th</sup>** June 11am  
Anniversary  
Thanksgiving Service  
led by **Rev Rachel Bending**  
followed by Refreshments

All are welcome



Ruislip Rd,  
Greenford  
UB6 9QN



The **Methodist** Church  
**Southampton** District

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District Welcome Service  
for

**The Revd  
Rachel  
Bending**

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as Chair of the  
Southampton District

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SUNDAY 15:00	<b>1</b>	SEPTEMBER 2024
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at

**Salisbury Methodist Church,  
SP1 1EF**

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All are welcome to our service of welcome  
including Holy Communion,  
followed by tea and cake

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For any queries please contact PA to the Chair,  
Sarah Potheary: [chairspa@sdmc.org.uk](mailto:chairspa@sdmc.org.uk)

## Forthcoming Events around the Circuit

### June

- 15<sup>th</sup> Sat 10.30 - 1pm **Greenford Church 99<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Weekend**  
Mini-market, Health Check-up and Food Packs Distribution.  
Exhibition – memories of old events, souvenirs, pictures
- 16<sup>th</sup> Sun 11am **Thanksgiving Service**, led by Rev Rachel Bending,  
followed by Bring and Share refreshments.  
Greenford Methodist Church

### July

- 7<sup>th</sup> Sun 4pm **Iris Axon Concert Series at Acton Hill**  
*Susie Gibbons, soprano*  
*Adults £6, Concessions £5, Children £2 (cash only)*
- 21<sup>st</sup> Sun 4.30pm **Circuit Service at Greenford**  
Awards and Farewell for Rev Rachel Bending

### September

- 1<sup>st</sup> Sun 3pm **Welcome Service for Rev Rachel Bending as  
Chair of the Southampton District**  
Salisbury Methodist Church
- 8<sup>th</sup> Sun 5pm **Welcome Service for Rev Stephen Day**  
Ealing Green Methodist Church

Articles for '**In-touch**' Issue No 103 (**September - November**) should be sent by e-mail headed '**In-touch**' to the Editor or as hard copy to the Circuit Office.

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Office hours: Tuesday to Thursday, 9–5

**Deadline for next issue: 1<sup>st</sup> August 2024**