



# St Neots & Huntingdon Methodist Circuit

Circuit: 14/25

## **Information Pack about the Churches in our Circuit.**

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The logo features a stylized green cross on the left, with a blue wavy line underneath it. To the right of the cross, the text "St Neots & Huntingdon Methodist Circuit" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

# St Neots & Huntingdon Methodist Circuit

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I have the immense privilege of writing a brief note at the beginning of the pack which will give you an overview of the churches in the St. Neots and Huntingdon Circuit.

My family and I joined the circuit in 2016 and have found it to be a rich and positive experience. The Circuit Stewards are all incredibly supportive and committed to helping each society in the circuit fulfil its contemporary mission. Throughout the circuit there are people who care, are committed and forward looking. There are many tiny shoots of promise which is encouraging and stimulating.

Together we seek to model our approach on Jesus who through the Gospel narrative we encounter as someone to whom others were attracted simply by the quality of his being and caring. We yearn to remain mission focussed keeping in view our calling as disciples to be disciple makers. Our desire is that we might remain pliable, teachable and movable in order to continue being movements not monuments.

What I treasure about the circuit is not that it is perfect but that it is seeking to be faithful with all that is entrusted to it. It is an exciting circuit to be part of at this time.

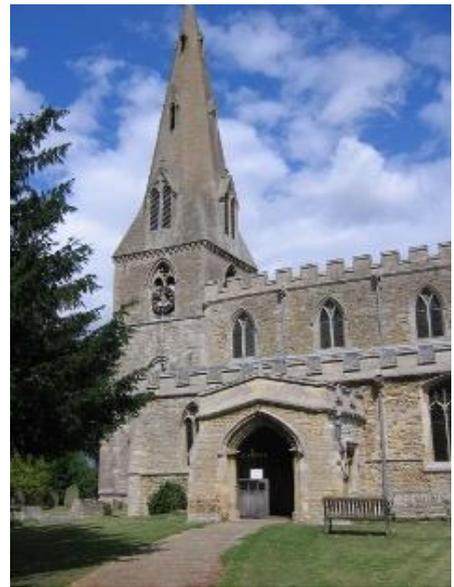
With every blessing,

*James*

## Alconbury cum Weston

### St Peter and St Paul's Church - Anglican with Methodist

Alconbury and the adjoining civil parish of Alconbury Weston have a combined population of around 3,000. They form the largest Anglican parish in the North Leightonstone Benefice, which also includes Buckworth, The Giddings, Hamerton, Upton & Copmanford and Winwick. It is currently served by a temporary part-time priest-in-charge who resides in Alconbury, supported by retired priests and by Lay Readers. It is anticipated that the Ely Diocese will shortly be announcing its future plans for the staffing of this area.



Since July 2008, Anglicans and Methodists worshipping together have used St. Peter and St. Paul's Church, the Alconbury-cum-Weston Parish Church. This is a developed relationship that has seen shared ministry at all levels and in all aspects of our church life over many years. Almost a quarter of our electoral roll are people from a Methodist tradition. Many who share in worship would not know or be concerned about the denominational allegiance of others.

The Covenant agreement, signed 6 May 2007 by leaders of both Anglican and Methodist congregations, provides the impetus for what we do. We are currently served by a Methodist Minister on one Sunday a month and Methodist pastoral care and representation is active in all levels of church life.

There are services every Sunday morning in St Peter and St Paul's church and our worship ranges from traditional BCP Holy Communion to All Age Worship as well as a range of services from Common Worship and a monthly Methodist Communion service.

Alconbury has a thriving youth work with different age groups meeting on a weekday evening and the monthly Sunday Rocks All Age Service provides an avenue into church with more informal and youth oriented worship, including breakfast!

In addition, Alconbury has an 'Open the Book' team which goes into the Alconbury Church of England Primary School fortnightly. The school and the church have strong links and a good number of the congregation volunteer regularly in the school and are/have been foundation governors.

The 'Open the Book' team has also started regular sessions at the Anglican /Methodist Ermine Street Church Academy.

We have recently built a porch on to the church which houses a toilet and tea preparation area. This was the culmination of the first phase of our Project 21 – an initiative designed to bring our church buildings to a place where they are fit for 21<sup>st</sup> Century use. The second phase of Project 21 – to build a warm community room in the interior of the church – is in the planning stages and we are very excited about where that project will lead us as we endeavour to show Christ's love and care in our community.

We have evolved together over many years and with many permutations but essentially we are a diverse group of committed Christians who, with our differences, rub along well together.

## Berkley Street Methodist Church – Eynesbury, St Neots

We are a friendly church family where all are welcomed and valued. We are a group of people who seek to share the love of Jesus Christ in our local community. We want to use our premises for God's glory and the benefit of the wider community.

### REGULAR WORSHIP

Sunday morning worship is attended by around 50 people from age 4 to 90+. Worship is varied with a range of modern worship songs and more traditional hymns. We are open to different styles of worship and welcome them but normally services are quite traditional including hymns, prayers, readings and a sermon. Around once a month a music group accompanies the piano and organ.



A choir of 10 ladies leads the congregation most weeks. We have no worship leaders but members are happy to take part in dramas, read and lead prayers. We also have a group of people who use puppets to share the Good News (seen with the all age nativity on the left).

On a monthly basis an evening café worship is held with open discussion and modern worship songs.

During term time Sunday Club meets, sadly the numbers have dropped off over the last couple of years but the members we have are strong in faith although small in number.

### WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

We have three regular prayer meetings, one in a morning and one in an evening, meeting alternative weeks. We also have a monthly virtual prayer meeting. Around three times a year we hold prayer mornings and we have a phone and email prayer chain.

Wednesday discussion group meets fortnightly to study passages from the Bible and discuss how we can live our lives to meet God's word. Eight people attend regularly but we strive to grow.

We have three fellowship groups: two for women (afternoon and evening) and a Men's ecumenical evening group. Each have a variety of speakers and activities throughout the year and share in prayer and worship at their meetings.

Other social groups include Bookworms (a reading club), and a craft club welcoming any craft.

A monthly soup lunch is served for a modest charge, being an opportunity to reach out to the community. We are set in a residential area outside the town centre and have a vision to engage more with our neighbours.



Thursdays are a busy day for Berkley Street, our Bargain Centre shop is open and we have coffee and chat in the morning as well as being a Trussel Trust Foodbank distribution centre, which we are a trustee of. The Bargain Centre opens on Thursdays throughout the year and on the first Saturday of the month from April to September. It has raised an average of £750 per month the Centre being open it is also a fantastic opportunity for outreach.

During term time, Brigade club meets on a Friday evening, the group is small in number but the members are faithful and join us for worship from time to time.

### **MESSY CHURCH**

Messy Church meets six times a year in school holidays. We have around 20 families who are "Messy regulars", with children ranging in age from a few weeks to teenagers. We also have many others who come once in a while. Most of the families who attend 'Messy Church' have little or no other contact with the established church. As a church we would like to deepen these connections and build the faith of those who attend message church and welcome them into further activities at Berkley Street.



### **CHURCH PROJECT**

Each year we have a church project, for which we raise money with a variety of events. At the moment we are fund raising for an outreach worker, this is following our vision day in 2017. We are currently praying and reflecting on the needs in our community for what type of outreach worker we feel God is calling us to appoint, as well as how we are best set to support a lay worker both prayerfully and practically. Our target is £20,000 and so far this year we have raised £12,000 from a variety of events including: a coffee morning, pancake party, family gameshow evening, Royal Wedding garden party, spring fayre and a harvest of Berkley Street talents.



In recent years we have also raised money for the local Hospice and for a school and orphanage in Uganda that some of our members have visited.

### **SAMARITAN'S PURSE SHOEBOX APPEAL**

Every autumn, Berkley Street acts as a drop off point and processing centre for Samaritan's Purse shoebox appeal. The church is a hive of activity with lots of visitors providing opportunities for outreach. The church family fill many boxes themselves as well as checking up to 3500 from local churches, schools and the community.



### **ECUMENICAL ACTIVITIES**

We are covenanted into Churches Together in St Neots and ACTIOS. – Assisting Christian Teaching in Our Schools. We take part in regular ecumenical services held at the local mental health hospital. We also visit a local care home – to share in worship.

## Brampton Methodist Church



Brampton is a large village with some 5,000+ residents and is situated 2 miles south west of Huntingdon. It is 16 miles from Cambridge and an hour from Kings Cross by train. It has direct access to the A1 and A14 and nearby rail links to London, Peterborough and beyond from Huntingdon Railway Station. There is also a guided bus that goes from St. Ives to Cambridge with a link from Huntingdon. A regular bus service passes through the village en-route from Huntingdon and St Neots. Hinchingsbrooke Hospital serves Brampton and the surrounding area. The village has a very good primary school which then feeds into Hinchingsbrooke School some two miles away.

Brampton, historically, was a small village which has grown quite considerably over the past 40 years. It had, up until very recently, a large RAF base but this has recently closed and the housing sold off and the office areas are being redeveloped with new housing thus creating a large influx of new residents.

Brampton has a lively history and more information on the village can be found on the Parish's website at: <http://www.brampton-cambs-pc.gov.uk/welcome/welcome.php>

**Brampton Methodist Church** is affectionately known as 'The Chapel on the Green' because of its close proximity to the village green. In fact, many people who have preached at the church, say it has one of the finest views from the pulpit in the Circuit! As you stand at the front and look down the church through the windows in front door the view of the green, particularly in the Spring, is beautiful and is a constant reminder of God's wonderful creation.



An interesting history of the church has been compiled by one of the members and regular organist, Maureen Wigley, in her book, published in 2001, entitled 'Chapel on the Green'.



The services regularly have an attendance of between twenty and thirty people, but sadly no children or young people on a regular basis. With the influx of new residents to the village the Church Leadership Team are investigating ways of encouraging more people to join them. Brampton

Methodist Church is 'famous' for its after-service refreshments which includes, as well as coffee and tea, a wide selection of biscuits and cakes many of which are homemade.

As well as the regular Sunday services, which follow a quite traditional format, other events are held including – Emmaus Bible Study, weekly coffee mornings and soup or 'bring and share' lunches and 'Little Fishes' which is social group meeting for tots and their parents/carers. The church always supports the annual Macmillan Coffee Mornings.

One of the most popular annual events is the 'Carols on the Green' service held on a Sunday evening before Christmas which usually attracts a gathering of seventy plus people from throughout the village who join in singing the well-loved carols followed by hot chocolate and mince pies in the church. This is a Churches Together event.

The Methodist Church is also fully involved in other Churches Together projects, the major one being 'Befrienders' which is an open morning and



lunch held in the Community Centre where everyone is invited, but is mainly aimed at those who may be alone or do not get out very often to come along and share in the friendship and fellowship with others.

The proximity of church to the village green means that whenever there is a community activity, such as a fete, on the green the church becomes an integral part of the activities offering a source of power and access to toilets amongst other facilities.

## Buckden Methodist Church

The chapel is situated in the heart of a rural but expanding village approximately a quarter of a mile from the Parish Church of St Mary's and half a mile from the Claretian monastery of St Hugh's which encloses the Catholic Church. This gives us close ecumenical links, which has proved very positive. The village primary school is a few minutes' walk from the Chapel and is a Church of England School. We would like to encourage the school to make annual visits to our Church again, as they have done in the past. Buckden is known for its welcome and the ability to make people comfortable. We welcome everyone. Our premises have a Chapel, hall, kitchen, toilets, Vestry and the Wesley room, which is a smaller room. At Buckden we are not here just for church members but also for the wider community and their families.



Our congregation is made up of older people and occasionally a young Mum and toddler. Our once thriving, Sunday School, is now in abeyance waiting for some young people to come to the Church. Five of our members have passed away this year and we are praying for new members. The prospect of new housing developments in the village brings the hope that we may be able to reach out to newcomers to the Village.



We meet every Sunday at 10:30am and welcome Presbyters, Local Preachers and take part in Local arrangements Services when no Preacher is available. It is normally traditional Worship with organ or piano, but we are open to more creative ways of Worshipping. We have ventured in Godly Play (yes even for adults), and other types of Service, although the preference seems to be for traditional Methodist preaching Services. We have a flexible Worship area with chairs and we can provide screens for videos. Fellowship continues afterwards with coffee, tea and biscuits in the schoolroom. We look out for one another and take time to care and listen. We have special lunches for special occasions such as Chapel Anniversary and Harvest Festival.

The church premises are well known to the village, are used for various activities during the week, and are assets to our Church. Once a month on Monday we host an ecumenical Study Lunch which has been running for almost ten years. Other organisations that use the building are the Karate Club, the Handbell Ringers group, The Aragon Singers, a local choir, and the Anglican Toddler Group. Occasionally there are youth activities when the Scouts hire the hall. On alternate Tuesdays we have Quiet Time at 9.30am: a time for reflection and quiet prayer, and once a month there is a Bible Study Group. On the third Friday of every month there is a Soup Lunch followed by a short service to which all are invited. On the other Fridays there is a regular coffee morning raising money for various charities. There are casual lettings of the schoolroom for children's birthday parties.

Our best outreach comes in the ecumenical context such as children's Holiday Clubs and 'Holidays at Home' for the elderly but also from being a drop off Centre for the Operation Christmas Child shoe-box campaign, which brings all sorts of interested folk in to deliver or help pack boxes, who then often stay, talk and get involved. This year our Church has been recognised, as a Church Collection Centre, which is very encouraging.

Ecumenical events (we are part of a Covenant with Buckden and District Churches) such as the Carol Service and Remembrance Sunday at St. Mary's are huge, and we are part of that. We give hospitality after

the ecumenical Good Friday Service and walk, and the Remembrance Day Service and our schoolroom is full of people.

Village folk old and young, our own congregation and partner village churches, various charities and local organisations are all benefitting from what we are doing right now.

We have identified a need for growth in the congregation and need new blood and a younger age group. It is hoped that when the proposed new development of several hundred new homes is completed that there may be opportunities to reach out to new families. We would like to do outreach work with teenagers. We have suitable premises but no personnel able to take on this role. Likewise, if we wanted to run a Day Centre. We will continue to work with the other Churches in the village and always have a welcoming presence in our Chapel.

## Eaton Ford Methodist Church

This is situated on the main road from the A1 to St Neots, on the edge of Eaton Ford and Eaton Socon, has a school and couple of nursing homes close by, also a retirement home, from which some of our members come.

It has a mainly elderly congregation, with just a couple of people under 65, one being early twenties. We have 21 members and 11 Adherents, with an average of between 15 – 25 at Worship.

At the moment we have Sunday Worship twice a month. Some of the worshipers like to have a traditional service, some appreciate a different type of worship.

Worship is followed by coffee and biscuits, a valuable time to enable members to get to know each other and be a caring pastoral community, and discuss thoughts and ideas to move forward.

We have a senior pastoral visitor and a buddy system, which enables us to ensure everyone is looked after as much as is possible. People have commented that they have come along because they have found a very caring welcoming church.

The Church had a make-over a few years ago, dealing with damp and very damaged walls, making it a very useable space, which included new blinds on the windows, enabling a projector to be used no matter how bright it is out outside, and a brightly painted front door welcoming newcomers in, we are about to erect a cross on it so passers-by can't mistake who we are.

The kitchen was replaced within the last 5 years, including up to date cooker, fridge and water heater, meaning endless possibilities for outreach, an idea that we are hoping to get off the ground is basic cooking lessons for partners who have never had to cook but now, due to death of partner or dementia of main meal maker, find themselves in the position of 'head' cook.

The main charity we support is Action for Children, we have a group called the Merrymakers, who rehearse in the church and give us two free concerts a year, one summer, one at Christmas, the proceeds of one of these goes solely to Action for Children. We also support, on appropriate Sundays, Christian Aid and Methodist Homes.

Unfortunately, due to the elderly nature of our membership, we are not able to do much in the way of outreach and mission, but with some support we have the enthusiasm and ideas.

We are a member of Christians Together in St Neots, and work ecumenically as much as possible, CTSN includes ACTIOS (Christian teaching in our Schools), Worship in a local prison, Christian Performing Arts – who put on a Passion Play throughout the town every 5 years, and support the ecumenical Good Friday silent procession and service in town, a bi-weekly coffee morning in town, a Fairtrade shop, amongst other things, helping us ensure we are bigger than the sum of our parts, and enabling St Neots Christians to have a bigger impact on the town and surrounding areas.

We join with CTSN for an ecumenical lent course, holding one of them at Eaton Ford, this is an opportunity to understand different denominations but also to emphasize One God, One Lord, One Church, they are always well supported and a good preparation for Good Friday when we come together for a service on the Market Square, and Easter Day, when every five years we come together to put on the Passion Play throughout different locations within the town.

We try to hold a couple of quiet days during the year, praying for the Church, mission and those who live within the area, these usually last about four hours, and are led by one person, allowing people to drop in and set a bit of time aside to be quiet, we also try to hold another bible based course over a six week period during the brighter days.



Whilst we are a smallish more elderly congregation, we have a real heart for Christ and spreading His love and Grace, and don't sit back in a defeatist way, we have grown over the last 14 – 16 years from a congregation of 8 -10 to the present day of 20 – 25, and are constantly searching for new opportunities for mission.

We look forward to the next chapter in our life.

## Great Barford Methodist Church

### The Church and its setting:

Gt Barford is a village 4 miles east of Bedford situated on what was the A428, the main road to the A1 until the A421 bypass was built about 10 years ago. The village is expanding with more houses being built all the time and is becoming a dormitory village.

The present chapel was built in 1903, though a society existed in the village for 100 years or so before that, which for some reason was always linked to the St Neots Circuit rather than Bedford's.



It has always been a small but resilient and friendly fellowship. The Sunday School existed until about 25 years ago, and now the church members are, as would be expected, of an older generation. There is a large Junior school in the village with which the Chapel has maintained closer links in the more recent years, with classes coming in to learn about Christianity and Methodism in particular. We held a special service for them last year and our aim is to continue these in future.

### Outreach

The church aims to play a greater role within the village encouraging more to join our fellowship both on Sunday and throughout the week. To make our premises more welcoming and flexible the pews were replaced by chairs some years ago, and the front of the church redesigned. More recently, a proper kitchen and toilets with disabled access were added.

We have spent time and money making the schoolroom (photograph) more welcoming and comfortable by having extra cupboard space built in which to put tables etc, renewing curtains at the windows, and having a carpet laid. Our next task is to upgrade the heaters.



We have been enabled thereby to welcome village organisations to use the premises: our Community choir, the local History group, a Keep-Fit group and the Healthy Walkers who use it to rest after their exertions. Our own fellowship meetings, committee meetings, coffee mornings and lunches are also held in the school room.

Our aim is to continue the process of welcoming groups onto our premises, encouraging them to get to know us and what we stand for and to welcome them at our services; thus far attendance has grown from a handful to 15+.

## Hilton Methodist Church

A small congregation (of 11 members and 6 adherents), at Hilton Methodist Church, we are committed Christians, work well together in a team, have ideas about mission and are experienced in running events and raising money.

### Worship

Our services are usually at 10 a.m. on Sundays but, once a month, we join with our Anglican friends with whom we have a covenant to worship and close links at 11.15, in some months at the Methodist Church and on alternate months at the Parish Church.

Whilst most preachers who come to Hilton offer us a traditional service, we are keen to welcome those who would like to try out new ideas and have enjoyed café and other styles of worship.



The members of the congregation are always willing to participate, engage in activities and give opinions during services if asked to do so. We are fortunate to have 2 organists and a digital hymnal which allows us to sing from "Singing the Faith", "Hymns and Psalms" and other books.



As well as special services like Harvest Festival, a lay-led carol service and a Toy Service we have services with larger congregations to celebrate special occasions such as the display of the "Knitted Bible", a year ago, our chapel anniversary in April, 2018, (to mark 150 years since the first service and sermon in the current church building) and a circuit service in August, 2018. Special teas are provided at such major events. Our next special event service is in late November to celebrate hosting 100 Christmas Cribbs from across the world. We are inviting all in the village and beyond.

In our recent local arrangements, various members of the congregation have led worship and explored such topics as vocation, the armour of light and "it matters what we do". The next local arrangement will be devoted to Sankey but involve quite a bit of technical equipment.

### Learning and Caring

We are keen that people in our church and village have opportunities to grow and learn as Christians. We are about to study Mark's gospel in our Bible Studies and in the past 2 years held an evening meeting to mark Christian Unity.

### Service

We serve the needs of others in a wide range of ways. We care for and look after one another and others pastorally in the village.

At the monthly Saturday coffee morning we sell fair trade goods. All proceeds received from the coffee and biscuits served are given to EACH (children's hospices). The coffee morning offers an opportunity for people to support one another in the village.



Together with our Anglican friends, during the year Advent and Lent lunches are held in various homes and raise money for local charities as does the joint carol singing. The very popular safari supper raises money for both churches and brings the village together. Harvest Festival goods go to the Foodbank in Godmanchester and money is donated to Water Aid. We also collect toys and money for Action for Children as well as support Christian Aid with a door to door collection.

A choir which rehearses in our church puts on an annual concert for those interested in music as well as a Christmas programme in December. Proceeds go to the church. A private nursery is run from 7a.m. to 7p.m. in our Sunday School (church hall). This caters for young families in the area around the village.

### **Evangelism**

Last year, we took up the challenge to knock on doors and post invitation leaflets through all the doors in nearby Papworth, Hilton and of the new houses in Fenstanton.

In September, 2018, we began working with the members of the Parish Church in Hilton on our latest joint mission project to run all age Messy Church which we call "Friday Feast". This is held once a month and we have been delighted to see 50+ (aged from baby to 94) at each session so far.

## Huntingdon Methodist Church

The Methodist Church (HMC) building is situated on the High Street in the town centre of Huntingdon (population 25,000). The current building was erected in 1878 and the ancillary buildings have been added over the years. There were previous Methodist Church buildings in the area dating back to 1768. The interior of the current multi-purpose worship area was substantially redeveloped in 1988, and in 2000 the toilets and kitchens were refurbished.



Huntingdon District Council has development plans for the next twenty years to build around 8,900 new homes in the town and its catchment area – including the major development at Alconbury Weald - which will be a mix of social and private housing. The Council also has plans to develop and substantially increase the business community, partly enabled by the improvements currently being made to the A14 dual carriageway. This will bring more people and visitors into the town daily.



*The Moving On Group Carol Service*

Our new vision for the church as a caring and supportive environment for the whole community is already starting to be realised, and this is evident by the growing number of church groups, community and voluntary organisations, using our premises, and we have a significant number of regular users with physical and learning difficulties.

We have recognised the fast growing and evolving challenges and opportunities in our community, and to enable us to respond to this calling we launched the Here4Huntingdon (H4H) project to redevelop, extend

and refurbish the premises. Phases 1 and 2 have already been completed which has seen our church re-roofed and our ancillary rear rooms completely redeveloped and refurbished.

We are currently planning to complete Phase 3 by the end of 2019 which will see more of our premises upgraded and extended so that we can be further equipped to meet our vision.

We are blessed with a church family which includes a mix of all ages, families, nationalities and both lifelong and new Christians. Our membership is around 135 but not all are active or worshipping. We also have around 80 adherents and our average Sunday congregation is around 100 which includes up to 20 young people in our Junior Fellowship. We do have several families and individuals who because of other commitments are not always able to worship, so our weekly congregation can vary quite considerably.

Our morning worship starts with 15 minutes of songs and choruses led by our musicians with a different weekly mix of guitars, brass /wind and clavinola.

Depending on the preacher, our young people either leave for their own groups at this point or after a young people's talk. The adult worship varies from week to week depending on the gifts of the appointed preacher. We have monthly All Age Family Worship which includes our young people and is led by our minister. Due to the decreasing number of presbyters and active local preachers in the circuit, we also have "own arrangements" for which we use The Vine material.

Our Sunday evening worship has recently changed from a traditional weekly service to a fortnightly "own arrangement" of either bible study or contemplative worship.



*JF's 211th Anniversary All Age Worship*



*Some of our musicians leading worship*



*Our puppets explain the nativity story*



*JF's display on biblical water stories*

We have a wide variety of mid-week and Saturday events throughout the year for both church family and our community. These include:

- Weekday mornings Open Door for anyone to drop in for refreshments, help and companionship.
- House groups and bible study groups.
- Midweek Communion
- Fortnightly Men's and Women's Fellowship Groups
- Weekly Baby and Preschool children group.
- Fortnightly Junior and Senior Youth Clubs
- Monthly Messy Church
- Quarterly Family Social events
- Seniors monthly lunches
- Weekly Operation Christmas Child Craft Group
- Annual Collection and processing point for OCC
- Support for Churches Together events
- Young Peoples /Family events with Town Centre Churches



*Our Seniors Christmas Lunch*



*Seedlings "pre-schoolers" Christmas Party*

Our primary challenge for the next 12 to 18 months is to complete Phase 3 of our Here4Huntingdon (H4H) project.

Our vision for the longer term is to:

- build on our partnership with local organisations and groups so that we can continue to be a vital strategic centre for Huntingdon and the surrounding area.
- enable us to be active Christian witnesses, demonstrate our faith in action and make more disciples for Christ.
- nurture all members of our church family in growing in the faith and encouraging them to become involved in the full life of the Church.

## Over Methodist Church

Over is a rural fenland village of about 1200 homes. It is mainly a commuter village, based about 14 miles from Cambridge and 12 miles from Huntingdon.

The village has a primary school, two pre-school's and an after school club.

The village also has an Anglican and a Baptist Church.

The Methodist Church is situated just off the High Street, in the centre of the village, and is a well-used venue for community groups. It benefits from having its own small car park adjoining the Church.



The Church is in a good state of repair and is well maintained. The Chapel has moveable chairs and lecterns, a Piano and Organ. The hall has an open plan kitchen at one end.



There is no youth work at the Church.

Services are held at 6pm each Sunday and are fairly traditional in style. The congregation is warm and welcoming, usually averaging about 12 people, comprised mainly of those in the 60+ age range, although we are fortunate to count among our members two enthusiastic young men aged below 35, one of whom has taken on the role of property steward. It is hoped that this younger element will be the catalyst for future outreach and growth.

There have been some attempts at forging ecumenical links in the village; Each year a united Advent Carol Service takes place at the Parish Church, with both other Churches in attendance.

There have been occasional other 'one off' ecumenical events, most recently an open air service to celebrate 100 years since Martin Luther's Thesis.

Our main form of outreach is through use of our buildings, and the way in which we interact with hall users.



Our aim is to encourage as much use of our buildings as possible by community groups, thereby not only providing a hub for the village, but also enabling people to 'cross the threshold' who would not otherwise come into the Church.

# Sawtry Methodist Church

## 'A Heart for Sawtry'

### Location

Sawtry Methodist Church is situated on a main road at the heart of Sawtry, a large village with a population of over 6500, just off the A1 midway between Huntingdon and Peterborough in the north of Cambridgeshire. The village is growing rapidly, with several hundred new houses built in recent years or currently in the planning stages. There is a Community Academy, which provides 11+ education, including a sixth form, plus Infant and Junior Schools, two pre-school playgroups and other under 5's childcare provision. The village also supports a wide range of community activities, groups and clubs.



### Congregation & Worship

Our average congregation on a Sunday morning is around 35, about a third of whom are of working age. Approximately two-thirds of the congregation live within the village, the rest travelling in from smaller neighbouring villages. Worship each week is led by one of our own experienced worship leaders, in cooperation with local preachers. Morning services are followed by lively fellowship over refreshments,

providing a church family where all can receive love and support and be nurtured in their faith.

In addition to the organ, there is a well-established worship band, supported by modern audio-visual equipment. The congregation is comfortable with a variety of worship styles and café-style services are a regular feature. Holy Communion takes place monthly, usually preceded by a prayer breakfast attended by 10 - 12 members of the congregation. Our church nurtures a strong sense of belonging and family, providing both a loving, supportive community and a warm welcome to visitors.



The church is financially solvent and the generosity of the congregation allows us to cover our primary expenses without reliance on income from lettings. We are currently mid-way through a major refurbishment project designed to improve the premises and allow us to continue the work of God in our community long into the future.

### Community Involvement

Members of the congregation are active in a variety of community groups, including the WI, British Legion, wildlife groups, food bank, a local village charity and the annual Sawtry Carnival. The premises are used daily by both our own church groups and by other community organisations, including a pre-school playgroup, bowling club and village choir. There are two midweek fellowship groups providing opportunities for people to explore and deepen their faith. The weekly Saturday coffee morning in the church hall has a regular attendance of around 30, most of whom are not church members.



## Ecumenical & Outreach

We have strong ecumenical links with the two other Sawtry churches - All Saint's Church of England and St Benedict's Roman Catholic community. Regular ecumenical events take place through the year, including seasonal services, a Good Friday 'walk of witness', an All Souls service and an annual open air service and picnic on the village green.

The churches jointly run 'Open the Book' assemblies at the Junior School and an annual holiday club, hosted at the Methodist Church, which attracts around 60 mostly unchurched children.

We have recently signed a license agreement enabling the Roman Catholic congregation to worship in our premises on Sunday afternoons.



## Hopes & Dreams

Our geographical location puts us at the heart of Sawtry, presenting us with both responsibilities and opportunities as we seek to share the Good News of Jesus with our community through our living, our preaching and our teaching.

As a Church family, we seek to love God, our community and each other in response to God's love for us in Christ. We are working to deepen our corporate and personal discipleship through our worship, bible study and day-to-day living, both individually and together as a family.

We are actively seeking to make more of our existing community and ecumenical links as well as finding new opportunities to reach out to our busy and rapidly-growing village.



## Ramsey Methodist Church

Once referred to as the Cathedral of the fens, the church is situated on the High Street of the market town of Ramsey. Built in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was the result of 3 local Methodist groups amalgamating into one substantial building. It has a small car park thanks to WW2 bombing. The two school rooms at the back were built in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and both have kitchenettes.

The sanctuary area has changed over time and also has a kitchenette and a disabled toilet as well as disabled access to the church area. Earlier this year the pews were removed and replaced by upholstered, stackable chairs to give greater flexibility of use.



The current membership of 21 is composed mainly of retired people, although there is a young family attending regularly. There are, therefore, various craft activities available at the rear of the church for children who attend and plenty of willing helpers to work on activities with them. Whilst the preference is for a traditional form of worship, the congregation enjoys different styles of worship and some of the more “modern” hymns. We regularly have congregations of 20+ with the 15 adherents swelling the numbers. Various groups use the church premises regularly, ranging from the weekly friendship group for retired individuals, to the “Rainbows”.

Recently a special needs group for adults is using a schoolroom as a drop in social area and “Little Miracles”, a charity supporting families with disadvantaged children, use the former caretaker’s cottage and a schoolroom 2 mornings a week.

The Ramsey Volunteer office is based in the former choir vestry 4 days a week and our own “Bookworms” meet regularly. “Open the Book” operates from the church with six members of the congregation going into local primary school every fortnight. The main church has been used for a number of concerts, especially since the pews have been replaced, with the Chatteris Town Band and the local Choral society among the users.



*One of the many delightful scenes from the Knitted Bible*

Ramsey Millions have also used the church as a venue for their meetings and we are looking forward to the WI drama group’s Pantomime in December.

The Church hosted “The Knitted Bible” in October 2017 with over 40 scenes from the scriptures on view to local schools as well as the general public, before it went to different churches in the circuit.

There are various ideas to move forward and to enable our facilities to be more accessible and flexible for a wider public use, as well to enhance the worship space for the church members.

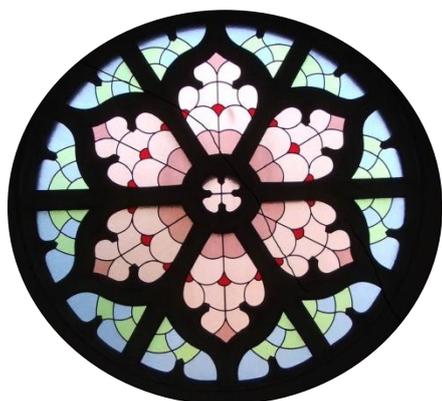
## St Ives Methodist Church

The church is situated at the western end of the historical and vibrant market town of St Ives. Opposite the Norris Museum and overlooking the River Ouse, it sits in an area called The Waits. There has been a church on this site since 1815. The present church building dates from 1915. Currently in the third (and final) phase of a renovation project, the premises are being updated to meet the demands of the growing community.



Sunday Services take place at 10.30am. St Ives is a pioneering church and services are a mixture of traditional and innovative. Attendance is normally 70 – 80 people. Children are an integral part of the congregation and there is a dedicated Children and Families Worker who oversees the children's corner. On the third Sunday in the month is a Café Service, which is a creative service with activities based around tables. It is popular with local families, and attracts around 120 people of all generations.

There is an evening service known as Breathe on the second Sunday of the month at 7.30pm. Breathe is a contemplative service that uses multimedia to explore life and faith in the modern world. Attendance is around 20 people.



There are regular weekday meetings, including Parents and Tots on Tuesdays from 10 to 11.30am. This group serves the local community and acts as a bridge to the café service and wider church. The hall is also open on a Tuesday morning for Open Door for refreshments and chat. Afternoon Fellowship is a small mostly retired group who meet on alternate Tuesday afternoons at 2pm with a speaker. On the third Tuesday in the month, there is a short lunchtime Communion service.

There are currently two Bible Study groups who meet at members' homes, as well as pop-up groups that run from time to time. A small intercessors group meets once a week on a Wednesday morning, with the second Wednesday in the month open to the wider congregation to specifically pray for Project 200, the renovation project. 24/7 Prayer Rooms are held regularly and offer people a creative peaceful space to meet with God.

Open Circle is a small non-denominational social group. The main body being retired Church members. Refreshments are provided and speakers on various subjects are booked when possible for the 2nd. and 4th Thursdays of the month meetings at 2pm.

In addition, the church offers a Remembering Service in December to connect with those who are grieving in the community. A Children's Nativity service on Christmas Eve at 4pm has become an established event within the community, when the chairs are moved out and replaced with straw bales. The church also partners with The Free Church for a Maundy Thursday service and Remembrance Sunday. There is also an early morning communion service at 8am on Easter Sunday, followed by breakfast.

The church practises radical hospitality makes use of plenty of props and has gained a reputation for a welcome that exceeds expectations.

The church works as part of the community of St Ives. For example, it is involved in Heritage Weekend, when several interesting buildings in the town are open for people to visit. Other events are run in partnership with the Norris Museum and Holt Island Nature Reserve nearby. Members serve refreshments

from the front of the church during the summer band concerts, Music on The Waits, and the church is an alternative venue for concerts when necessary.

Many community groups hire rooms on the premises. Up to 15 different groups currently use the premises, including the Scout group and National Childbirth Trust.

The Pastoral Friends care for the welfare of all members and take pressure off the minister and develop a sense of community.

The church is an active member of Churches Together in St Ives. Churches Together organizes several events through the year, including a Good Friday March of Witness, and a float in the St Ives Carnival. They also run Church in the Marketplace once a month to offer a Christian presence in the market.

The church supports the Butts Grove Family Centre who support local families in need and donations are brought forward for blessing alongside the collection. There are links to the charity Action for Children and once a year a representative of the charity comes to speak about their work. Other charities are well supported and 5 % of all fundraising for Project 200 has gone to local and national charities. Once a year, there is World Church Sunday when a visiting speaker tells of their work and ministry in other parts of the world, for example, the reconciliation work in the Balkans.

Membership currently stands at 112 and 40 adherents. The church has known significant growth and has welcomed 40 new members in the past seven years.



## Tempsford Methodist Chapel

The village population is round 600 people but is split in two by the A1. The Parish Church being one side of the A1 and the Methodist Church in Station Road.

Methodist Services have been held in Tempsford since the late 1793 when worshippers gathered in a farmhouse at the invitation of a local farmer.

The present Chapel was constructed in 1804. A schoolroom was added in 1878 and further improvement and upgrades to the kitchen and toilet facilities in 2010. The Chapel is one of the oldest Methodist Churches in the area.

Sunday worship is generally held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays of each month – held at 6.00 p.m. during the Summer months and 3.00 p.m. during the Winter.

We currently run three monthly get-togethers in the Chapel Schoolroom being a Lunch Club, Tea and Chat and a more recent addition a monthly Coffee Shop in the Schoolroom which is proving to be very popular.

A recent new addition is a children's singing/activity group which we hope to expand on.

The majority of the elderly live alone and is only supported by a local volunteer community bus service and being able to get together with others for a hot meal and a chat lessens their loneliness and allows a sense of belonging to the village community and the surrounding area.



## Warboys Methodist Church

Warboys Methodist Church is strategically situated in the centre of the village, which lies approximately seven miles from Huntingdon and four miles from Ramsey.

The chapel contains a worship area, a meeting room (both of which are self-contained) and a spacious kitchen. There is also a vestry, toilets and good storage facilities.

Worship is at 6.00 p.m. on a Sunday evening, attended by up to 20 people, some of whom visit local Anglican churches for morning worship. The service is fairly traditional, yet varied in content. From time to time we may have a special speaker and occasionally hold a café-type service. We have access to two hymn books and have also compiled our own supplement of more recent songs.



Each Wednesday we hold 'Open Door', centred on coffee and chat and general fellowship. This concludes with a short Bible message and prayers for the community and further afield.

A fortnightly Bible Study is held in the home of church members, to which some nine folk attend. During Lent we serve lunches followed by a short Lenten message.

As an outreach on Good Friday we offer Hot Cross Buns, together with an Easter tract, to passers-by at the church gate. As a further outreach at Christmas we have, by invitation, sung carols at the White Hart next door. During the year gatherings for coffee and an annual Gift Day continue to be held.

We also try to support Circuit activities wherever possible, and also village activities where appropriate. In Feast Week 2018 we hosted an exhibition as part of our involvement and combined that with serving refreshments throughout the day.

A Mothers and Toddlers group (initiated by the local Parish Church) meets in our church on a Monday morning.

Our aim is to encourage more people to join us for worship, to begin a journey of faith, themselves getting to know Jesus. We seek to explore ways in which we may implement this through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

