



West Devon
Methodist Circuit

NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2026

"Yours is the day, yours also the night; you established the luminaries and the sun. you have fixed all the bounds of the earth; you made summer and winter" (Psalm 74 v 16,17)

Forest Church Eclipse Barbecue



It was a beautiful evening on Wednesday 12th August as we gathered at Evergreen Farm to witness the eclipse. People from across the Circuit were there, Madworthy, Exbourne, Boasley, Bridestowe, Fairplace, Chilla, Petrockstowe and also friends from other denominations too. Alongside us were holidaymakers from Evergreen Farm Campsite. Numbers were estimated at about 150 people. The queue at the delicious barbecue was lengthy but worth the wait. And so, we chatted, ate and drank as we waited for the eclipse to begin.

Many brought official eclipse glasses, some home-made eye shields and some welding masks! Frank from Madworthy said his welding mask was used for the 1999 total eclipse; this year his daughter Henrietta had a mask of her own too.

As the eclipse came to its fullest moment, Angela Banfield led a spontaneous

rendition of the first verse and chorus of "How great thou art" which many joined in, knowing this very popular hymn off by heart. The field became a sacred space as we were in awe of the celestial phenomenon. The fact that even at 96% coverage, the brightness of the sun was still incredible became a talking point for some of the Local Preachers present. Just 4% of sunlight was plenty to still see by, in fact it was only a



bit dimmer than normal. How does that compare to the glimpses of the glory of God we experience in this life?

"For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known."
1 Corinthians 13:12
NRSV



*O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder
Consider all the works thy hand has made;
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder, thy power
throughout the universe displayed.*

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to thee,
How great thou art, how great thou art.*

Thank you, Angela for organising this awesome event to mark a celestial rarity.

Forest Church

The next dates for Forest Church are:
October 11th & November 8th at 2.00pm meeting at
Evergreen Farm EX21 5HE

Dogs on leads welcome.

INFUSION

children | youth | families



There have been two Stay and Play day events in the summer holidays at Fairplace. Both very well attended – serving meals to over 70 in July and more than 90 in August. The cooking activity in July was making trifles and in August the children made pizzas to be cooked in brand new pizza ovens by adult volunteers.

There is a giant Ker-Plunk game now as well as giant Connect Four.

We rely on volunteers to make these days as successful as they are, parents and carers are so appreciative of free activities and a meal. (Donations happily received!) It's a service to the community, part of the ministry of the Church and a lot of fun. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact Sarah Balsdon.

"Our brains are built to benefit from play no matter what our age."

Theresa Kestly



A space for babies, toddlers, parents and carers. Sessions will include snacks for the children and refreshments for the adults before ending with tidy up time and a story. Special/themed sessions will be advertised online. £2 for the first child, £1 per additional sibling.

Autumn 2026

Thurs 10th Sept
Thurs 24th Sept
Thurs 8th Oct
Thurs 22nd Oct
Thurs 5th Nov
Thurs 19th Nov
Thurs 3rd Dec
Thurs 17th Dec

Spring 2027

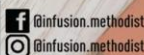
Thurs 7th Jan
Thurs 21st Jan
Thurs 4th Feb
Thurs 11th Feb
Thurs 25th Feb
Thurs 11th Mar
Thurs 25th Mar

Summer 2027

Thurs 15th Apr
Thurs 29th Apr
Thurs 13th May
Thurs 27th May
Thurs 10th Jun
Thurs 24th Jun
Thurs 8th Jul
Thurs 22nd Jul

Facilitated and supported by

INFUSION



West Devon
Methodist Circuit



The holiday clubs at Hatherleigh, Winkleigh, Madworthy and Petrockstowe were a great success. Lots of fun activities, crafts, games, cooking, and learning together how Jesus wants us to support one

another in community and make our world a better place. Being Holiday Club, there was the obligatory custard pie for a young leader at the end!





Thank you to everyone who helped to make the holiday clubs a success. We really appreciate you. Lots of happy children and happy parents.
It's quite an undertaking to organise, but so gratifying when you see the smiley faces.

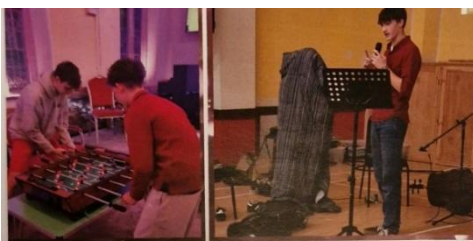


Kree8 is the monthly youth service (Year 5+) which meets at Madworthy Next dates are 18th October and 15th November.

Doors open at 6.30pm with bring and share food. Main event 7.00 – 8.30pm Ecumenical in nature, drawing people from a number of different churches. Everyone welcome. Find more details and sign up via the website <https://www.westdevonmethodists.org.uk>

3rd - 5th July Stowford

Camp had a new venue this year at Clinton Hall, which both children and adults agreed was a great environment. The weather was perfect, the teaching sessions around the story of King David were well thought out and a highlight was the racing of the Ark. Drawing inspiration from King David dancing with joy as he led the Ark of the Covenant to



Jerusalem – teams made an ark out of cardboard and had to construct a way of attaching bamboo poles with string so that they could carry the ark without touching it and navigate an obstacle course. Some innovative solutions to the problem were on display, we can be sure that our young people are smart and good at working with others.

The camp concluded with a service which was attended by parents too – some for the first time. It was a very happy occasion, many of the parents had attended Stowford Camp when they were children and it was a joy to see this annual event become a family tradition.

Leave footprints of kindness where your children will walk."

Anonymous

A Little Bit of History

This year was the fortieth anniversary of Stowford Camp. Doreen Bray of Halwill kept a diary and this is her entry:

"Friday 4th July 1986. Our camp weekend started tonight. I went down Ruth's this morning when we tried to work out sleeping arrangements, food etc. We both began to wonder if it would ever take off! & then it rained & by evening it was pouring. Anyway, we had our first session which went very well... Most of the tents leaked – Trevor & Leslie's worse than anyone's so they spent the night in the barn! Our tent was wet, so David went and got 2 silage bags & he & Ruth slept in one & Bill & I in the other. Quite a new experience but at least we kept dry!!

We now know it did indeed take off even though the first night was far from ideal, the Saturday was also wet but back to Doreen's diary, *"The sessions were led by Cyril & Paul Hardy & we all received a blessing. Beryl Balsdon took the youngest group & she was thrilled with them & they with her. The young people from Elim Plymouth came up & did our Barn Campus. Our Knockout was nearly a washout the youngsters taking part were soaked to the skin!"*

(Can you spot Beryl in the photo opposite? 40 years on and still volunteering! Ed.)

Barn Campus was the name of the event Stowford Camp grew out of; it began in the mid-1960s when Rev Tom Darlington approached a young David James with the idea of a "Barn Campus" Summer Saturday event. He arranged this with the help of Dick Branch at Tutchenor Farm. It quickly settled into the rhythm of local Church life with activities and games including "It's a knockout". The day concluded with an evening meeting.

Through the 70s and into the 80s, Barn Campus was a much-loved fixture but there was a vision to make it bigger. Stowford Farm was the new venue, with David and Ruth James hosting it in their field. Rev David Barnfield who was himself a former serviceman, sourced some army tents. One year there was a storm in the night and

David James remembered, "One little lad was sound asleep with the tent flattened on top of him!"

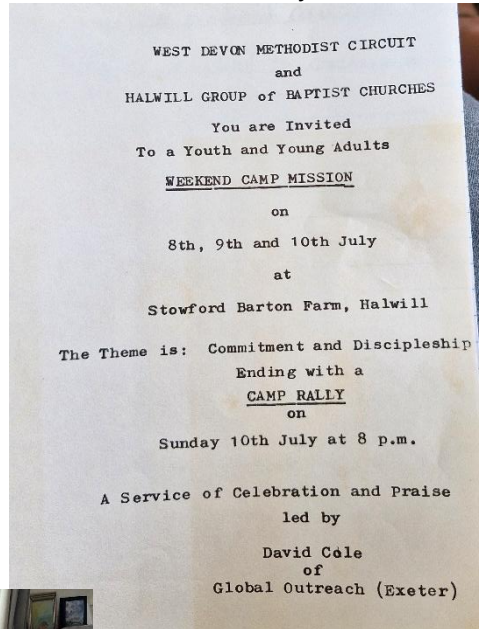
A flyer from 1989

Doreen noted in her diary "*Barry's (Searle's) sessions went well.*"

... "Everyone seems to be looking forward to next year."

Doreen records the fun and games, treasure hunts and concerts over the years, remarking "*It's amazing the talent that is around if it's only encouraged.*"

In the early 2000s there was a particularly wet year with no window in the weather to set up. David recalled, "It was a choice to cancel or move - Winsford Trust, the Village Hall and the Baptist Church were available, so we moved sites." Over time, they approached the school to camp in the grounds, which was became the hub of three venues together with the Baptist Church and Village Hall. Stowford



Ruth James, Doreen Bray & David James

have been forged that have lasted decades and generations have benefitted from the vision and commitment of all who have supported it. There are many people in our area who can trace their faith journey back to Barn Campus or Stowford Camp, thank you to everyone who has pitched in with the work of God amongst us.

John Hawkins with David & Ruth at Stowford 2026



John Hawkins has been part of the Stowford team for decades and was out again this year putting up & taking down the tents. What a trooper!



*The field at
Higher
Stowford
where it all
began forty
years ago.*

Rural Recharge

The initiative to provide space to talk and activities to enjoy for men who are farmers or agricultural workers was in the national spotlight on the Sunday Show on Radio 4 on August 23rd. Thanks to the internet, you can still hear Rev Chris and Frank Glanville talk about it on BBC Sounds.

A message from Sally O'Hare

'A Thank You!'

I've now finished my placement in the Circuit and wanted to say thank you so much, to all of you who took time to show me some of the life of the West Devon Circuit. I really appreciated all your care and enthusiasm; it helped make the placement a really brilliant experience of ministry and mission. I will continue to remember the warmth of the welcome I received.



Wishing you all every blessing,

Sally

Letter From the Superintendent

September always feels new to me. Strangely, more than January. Perhaps it goes back to school days when the new term started, a new year, a new class, things always felt different, exciting and full of hope for what was to come. As you can tell, I liked school...sorry about that, I appreciate for some that the new term brought it with it anxiety and change that was not always welcome, especially when a new school was involved.

The other thing that makes September “new” for myself is that the Methodist “new year” begins in September. It is the time when ministers move to their new circuits and begin a new challenge, a new phase of their ministry. It has not been lost on me that this year I begin my new appointment. The place has not changed but the appointment is new and the challenges will be different. Thank you to the circuit for reinviting me to continue to share my ministry with you.

Having had a time of reflection due to illness during the past month, I am grateful for the prayers of all of you in my road to recovery. Reflection periods are times to think, to pray, to read and to study (as well as getting up to date with the paperwork) ...and it has been a valuable time. I have engaged with a lot of theological reading and a lot of immersing myself in the Bible and listening carefully to God. I find themes often recur during the process and ideas begin to crystalise.

Something I believe God has been prodding me about for some time is for me to engage more in one of my passions, that of Biblical studies. Therefore, one of the things I will be engaging with more over the next five years is teaching. You’ve all heard my three words (Community / Discipleship / Growth) ...I believe as a circuit we are moving more into the discipleship phase, and therefore the need for teaching is essential for growth to happen. One iteration of this will be the start of a Circuit teaching course I will be leading fortnightly at Madworthy (further details are in the newsletter) which is open to everyone across the circuit and will be a walk through the theology and history and teaching of the New Testament. In our society today it is important for Jesus disciples to increase our biblical and theological literacy in order to make sense of the increasingly complex world around us, to enable us to live well with our faith and to be able to share and reflect the good news of Jesus in a positive and coherent way.

I am looking forward to the next five years with passion and excitement. A time of learning, a time of action and a time of growth.

I am forever reminded of the calling of the Methodist Church (which is pinned to the wall in my office) ...

"The calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the Gospel of God's Love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission".

Another way the Methodist church expresses this is that "we are called to be a growing, inclusive, evangelistic and justice-seeking Church".

It is OUR mission statement...and we are called to live it daily.
AMEN

Rev Chris

Exploring Further

An introduction to the history, literature, and theology of the First Christians.

A video and discussion study course based on the book
THE NEW TESTAMENT IN ITS WORLD
by Professor NT Wright.

Every other **TUESDAY**
from 7pm-9pm at
MADWORTHY
Methodist Church
beginning on
6th October

We are also providing the opportunity to join us on zoom. For more info and the link please contact Rev Chris on chris.jackson7@gmail.com

West Devon
Methodist Circuit

For the curious, those who wonder about the who, what and where of the New Testament.

Understanding more of "then" helps us to understand more of "now".

Bring an enquiring mind and be prepared for a new adventure.

N T Wright is one of the world's leading New Testament scholars, he is the author of many books, both academic and lay level.

He is ordained in the Church of England and was Bishop of Durham between 2003 - 2010

Petrockstowe



Macmillan Coffee Morning

Do your bit for better cancer care

10:00 - 12:00pm

Friday 25th September

at Baxter Hall

Together we will do whatever it takes to make cancer care better for everyone



Registered with
FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR

Macmillan Cancer Support, registered charity in England and Wales (269075), Scotland (SC269075) and the Isle of Man (269075). Also operating in Northern Ireland. MAC20278.

**MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT**

A registered charity

 PETROCKSTOWE COMMUNITY CHURCH

HARVEST FESTIVAL

Service, Lunch & Auction

(proceeds split between the Farming Community Network and the Community Church)

SUNDAY 04 OCTOBER
11:00AM

Service led by Rev'd Melvyn Cooke
at Petrockstowe Community Church
followed at 12:00pm by a
Cold Meat and Salad Lunch

£12:00 per Adult /
£6:00 per Child (up to 11 yrs)
(includes 2 course lunch)

To book contact:
Ann Luxton - 01837 810728

An auction of produce will be
held after the lunch

ALL WELCOME

Charity Registration No.: 1204345



Petrockstowe is hosting the monthly Circuit Praise Service on October 11th at 6.30pm

Chilla

Another lovely service of reflective worship was held at Chilla on 22nd July. Angela led us in looking at Isaiah chapter 55 and reflecting on the theme of blessing. We were encouraged to write a blessing, which was an interesting exercise. A gentle time of music, silence and contemplation... followed by tea and cake!

The next service will be in October, date to be confirmed so keep an eye out for the publicity.

Chilla's Harvest Festival is on 18th October at 2.30pm



"We were put on this magical planet, not to dominate and consume her, but to care for her and love her. To harrow gently. To harvest gratefully. To build reasonably." David Paul Kirkpatrick

Winkleigh

**WINKLEIGH
METHODIST CHURCH**

Invites you to an

**Harvest Celebration
Lunch**

**Sunday 11th
October
1pm
Winkleigh
Village hall**

All profits to be
Donated to
Devon Air Ambulance
&
FORCE
cancer charity

*Cold meats & a
variety of salads
Vegetarian options
Desserts
Tea, Coffee*

Ticketed event
only
Adults
£15
Children up to 11
£5

**Tickets available NOW from Jane Hill 01837 680128
and Fiona Marshall 01837 83382**

Last year, Winkleigh's Harvest lunch raised £1026 to share between Devon Air Ambulance and the Farming Community Network. We hope to raise another good amount this year. Hurry and get your tickets!

Madworthy

Bible Study and Lunch Group

Meeting fortnightly, this is an open, ecumenical group who love to delve into the scriptures, taking time to think and discuss what they find there. A relaxed friendly atmosphere and a delicious lunch too. The next date is 25th September.

Madworthy Harvest Festival Brunch Service 27th September 11.00



The Great Apple Press

Saturday 26th September 2026

9:30am - 3pm

Madworthy Methodist Church

9:30 - 11:30am - Creative Faith

10:30 - 12pm - Open Saturday

Join us between 12-3pm for
some soup, decorating the church,
apple pressing,

(bring your own apples & bottles)

Harvest themed crafts
and more...

Donations in aid of church funds
Dried goods for Holsworthy Foodbank

 @madworthy.methodist

Dogs on leads welcome

Providence

The last of this year's open days featuring the Dartmoor photographs by Chris Chapman is on Saturday 10th October. If you haven't been yet, you have missed a treat. Open from 12.00 – 6.00pm with refreshments served throughout.



Saturday 24th October **Afternoon Tea Variety Concert with Jim Causley**

Tickets £10 on the door. Cash only please.
Doors open 2.00pm for 2.30 start

Book Review by Debbie Scott

ASK ME TO STAY WITH YOU

This story is based in Cornwall but also has a connection with Spain, during Victorian times. The recently appointed rector Richard

Mathieson rides his horse confidently into the Cornish village of Perranwithick, the locals are curious about this newcomer and how capable he will be at rejuvenating the failing parish of St. Peter.

Steadily working hard to restore the church, encouraging the local tradesmen; Richard gains the trust of the parishioners. He encounters the very poor and the wealthy, the fishermen and in particular the crew of the Rose of Endau and their sideline which attracts the attention of the excise man Captain Faraday. What are they up to, apart from fishing that is? Should the Rector condone these activities?

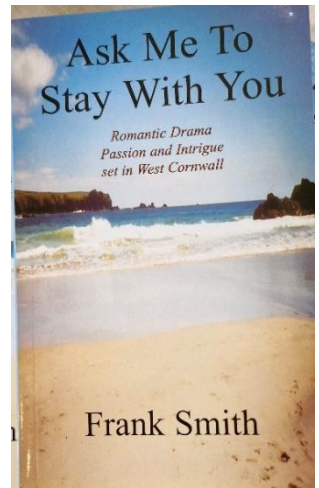
A gripping parish story with the 'good', the 'bad' and the 'ugly', the ups and downs of lust and love, with a backdrop of the seafarers and the land lubbers and how they meet in the middle!

Can religion really be a part of this story? - somehow it can.

Frank is incredibly knowledgeable of nautical information, having been a Petty Officer in the Royal Navy and sailed his 34-foot Sloop with his wife Eunice; he clearly loves sharing this with the reader but in an uncomplicated way.

The story flows well and is comfortable to read, there are some exciting chapters and the book has characters I warmed to and those I was glad they would get their comeuppance in the end.

This book was Eunice's favourite - Frank said it was because she was in love with Richard Mathieson!



Hatherleigh

The wedding dress exhibition was a great success with thirty-eight wedding dresses plus bridesmaid's dresses too. Thank you to everyone who helped make it such a memorable occasion. We are pleased to say that we raised well over £600 for the new kitchen.



The Carnival is on 14th November and the church will be open for those who want a relatively quiet space to come and eat your takeaway, have a cuppa or just use the loo!

We are glad to be at the heart of the community during this big event.

A warm welcome awaits you.



Fairplace

Dates for your diary:

Saturday 21st November 7.00pm Big Quiz Night in aid of Tear Fund

Advent Sunday 29th November at 4.00pm. An Advent Musical.

More details to follow on the Circuit Poster and Facebook page.

Bridestowe

Harvest Festival Service 4th October 11.00am followed by a bring and share lunch. No tickets required, all are welcome.

Iddesleigh

Harvest Festival Service 11th October 11.00am

Northlew



Harvest Festival Service

11th October 2.30pm

Boasley



Harvest Festival Service

25th October 11.00am

Editor's Note

It became very apparent that this is a very busy circuit as I was collating the events, past reports and future announcements. I am sure that there must be things left out for which I apologise but keep your eye on the monthly poster and the Circuit Facebook page for up-to-date information.

As we are fully into the harvest season we are reminded how fragile the earth is, the heatwave has taken a toll on some harvests while some crops have thrived. Bluetongue has affected many of our farms too. We are in a changing world and need to pray and act responsibly towards our planet. So as you celebrate and enjoy the harvest celebration meals, bear in mind those producers and consumers who are finding this year particularly challenging. May God bless you as you bless others.

Vicki foreva26@hotmail.co.uk

Superintendent Minister

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chris.jackson7@gmail.com

www.westdevonmethodists.org.uk

