

WINCHESTER NEWS

SEPTEMBER 2025



Winchester Road Methodist Church
Winchester Road, Highams Park London, E4 9JP

Minister: Rev Stephanie Njeru

Email: Stephanie.njeru@methodist.org.uk

Tel: Church 020 8531 8663

Mobile: 07458 050833 / Landline: 020 8279 2380

www.winchesterroadchurch.org.uk



Group: Winchester Road Methodist Church

Letter from our Minister

Happy New Year!

September is the start of the Methodist Church year. Ministers start new appointments and students start their pre-ordination training. We join in with the new starts that many others experience as well, children moving up to new schools or colleges, parents and carers taking little ones to school or nursery for the first time.

There are many changes that September brings, many opportunities for new life and growth. As nature changes to bright reds and oranges around us, we can, so easily, find a different way of living invigorating and renewing.

This September five young people at Leyton Trinity will be confirmed. Confirmation in the Methodist Church is an opportunity to share your faith journey with others. It is confirmation of the faith which you have. It also gives us an opportunity to become members of the Methodist Church after a series of group discussions. It is, in a sense, a new beginning. One where we celebrate growth in faith and understanding of how God works in us and through us.

We know that it is God's promise to bring new life to all, that we may enjoy it in its fulness. When we remember that, when we look around us at smart new uniforms, the excitement of children as they walk to school and meet up with all their friends again. When we see the beauty of the natural world changing and transforming into a different kind of beauty after the summer flowers, may we remember that God wishes us new life, a joyful energy and a deeper faith. With blessings, Rev Stephanie.

"Remember whenever you're in a position to help someone, be glad and do it, because that's God answering someone else's prayers through you."

Message posted by a friend

Services

Sun. 7th Sept: 10.30 Led by Rev. Kevin Swaine

Sun. 14th Sept: 10.30 Led by Carole Merriman and Peter Richardson

Sun. 21st Sept: - Led by Cynthia Bonds

Sun. 28th Sept: Communion led by Rev. Stephanie Njeru

Sun. 5th Oct: - 10.30 Harvest (All Age Worship) Led by Rev. Mike Long

Church Flowers:

Sept 7th - in loving memory of Ron Clarke

**Sept. 14th - in loving memory of Frances Mansfield
(Christine & Allen's Daughter)**

Sept 21st - in loving memory of John Dixon

Sept. 28th – In celebration of the wedding of Mark Richardson and Jennifer Zhang



Shoeboxes

I've started filling the shoeboxes and find I'm very short of special things for girls i.e.- hair slides, bracelets and necklaces, I put these into the little bags that Christine Steel crochets. Also, as I put certain items into every box I probably will run out of soap toothpaste and toothbrushes. I will be ok for flannels. Thank you, Sylvia.

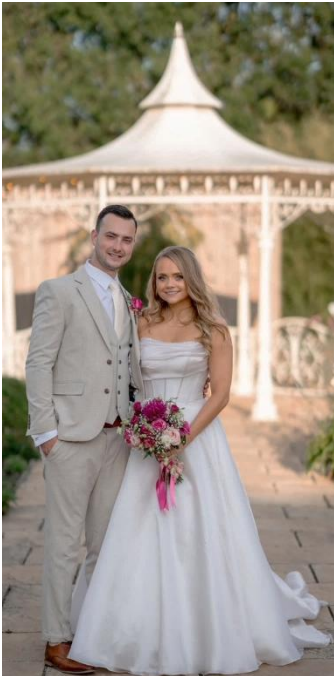
Our Church Family



Lindy and Peter Richardson are pleased to announce the marriage of their son Mark to Jennifer Zhang. The ceremony took place in Shanghai, China on 9th July.

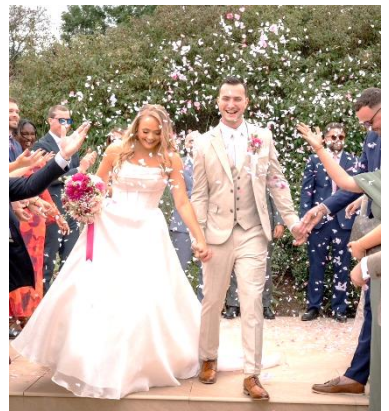


There will be a Service of Blessing of their Marriage at Winchester Road on Saturday 27th September at 2pm, to which all are invited.



Congratulations to Eris Crawford and Jamie Ramsey who were married on 21st August at The Pear Tree, Purton, on a gloriously sunny day in the Cotswolds.

You might like to know that Winchester Road played a significant part in their relationship as Eris and Jamie first met at Gang Show rehearsals in the Church halls 15 years ago.



What's On !



Friday Coffee Mornings 10 – 12 am

Tea, coffee and biscuits in the Hub. (Term time only). These will start on Friday Sept. 19th.

These coffee mornings raise money for various charities. Last term £220.45 was raised for the Children's Cancer Trust. The charity for this term is to be decided.



Grand Christmas Bazaar at Winchester

Saturday 22nd November.

New Circuit Groups for Youth (13-18) and Young Adults (18 – 35)

For information contact Zak Njeru – 0745802244 /
pastoralmethodist@gmail.com)

London Methodist Lunch Club Fri. 12th Sept. 13:00 - 16:30

Wesley's Chapel and Leysian Mission 49 City Road London EC1Y 1AU
Pilgrimage to freely enter Wesley's Chapel with others to hear Revd. Canon Dr Julian Pursehouse, Chair of the Editorial International Board of the Holiness Journal affiliated with Wesley House Cambridge talk on **“What would John Wesley's message be today?”**

1:00pm – 1:30pm Reception and refreshments

1:30pm - 2:15pm Welcome, Julian's talk, and question and answer.

2:15pm - 3:15pm a walkabout and talk led by Carole Merriman or a visit to the House and talk led by Peter Richardson

3:15pm Closing Act of Worship led by Revd Canon Dr Julian Pursehouse. Refreshments and fellowship after worship.

One more step with Sydney Carter

For the Methodist Church, September is the beginning of a new year, the month when Ministers take up a new appointment if they are moving on. This year it is also a key month for at least two members of our Young Church who will take the important step from Primary to Secondary School. My wife and I will be thinking of one of our great granddaughters who will be leaving a nursery to begin at Primary School.

Sydney Carter wrote the words and music of a song/hymn (STF 476) which has become popular with schools which begins:

'One more step along the world I go, one more step along the world I go, from the old things to the new, keep me travelling along with you.'

Carter wrote the song/hymn for pupils in the Southwark Cathedral School choosing his words with care so that it could be sung by pupils of differing religions, or no religion. Surprisingly I have been told that it is now frequently chosen as a wedding hymn.

Sydney Carter (1915-2004) was a Quaker, a member of the Religious Society of Friends. In 1971 he wrote both the hymn and the tune which he named Southcote (after a former Provost of the Cathedral). The words were influenced by several passages from the Bible, including Psalm 37 verse 23 *'The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord; and he delighteth in his way'*. Carter was born in Camden Town and won a scholarship which took him to Christ's Hospital School and on to Balliol College (Oxford University) and into teaching. During the War, as a pacifist, he volunteered to serve with the Friends Ambulance Unit and was sent to Greece and the Middle East. After the war in the 1950's & 60's he carved out a successful career contributing words and music to a number of revues on the London Stage alongside Donald Swan and Michael Flanders.



There are two other hymns he wrote included in *Singing the Faith* which I am sure many of you will know. In the first he 'tells the gospel story in the first-person voice of Jesus of Nazareth portraying Jesus' life and mission as a dance.' In this hymn Sydney was influenced by a traditional old carol 'Tomorrow shall be my dancing day'

I danced in the morning when the world was begun (StF 247.) with the chorus.....'*Dance then, wherever you may be, I am the Lord of the dance said he.*'

The hymn attracted criticism for Carter's portrayal of Jesus as the leader of a dance and also for reference to the role of the Jews in the death of Jesus (verse 3) which was seen by many as being anti-Semitic. Despite this criticism the hymn became popular due to his use of a traditional Shaker hymn tune' entitled 'Simple Gifts' composed for the hymn 'Tis a gift to be simple tis a gift to be free'. The Shakers were a mid-eighteenth century English Christian sect who held a strong belief in the imminent coming of Jesus. They emigrated to America in 1774 led by their founder Ann Lee where they formed sizable celibate, communal and pacifist communities in the North-Eastern and Mid-Western States of the USA. Shaker worship is characterised by its 'ecstatic nature' including dancing singing and shaking or trembling. Followers of Classic FM will also know this tune, which Aaron Copland used for his ballet *Appalachian Spring*.

The second hymn written by Sydney Carter came from a commission to write a hymn for the 20th Anniversary of the founding of the charity Christian Aid in 1965 for which Carter was inspired by the Parable in chapter 25v 31- 36 of Matthew's gospel. The Good News Bible entitles the passage '**The Final Judgement**' describing the time when all people will be gathered and then divided into two groups, one on the right and the other on the left, in the same manner as the shepherd divides his flock into sheep and goats. The people on the right will be addressed with the words "*I was hungry and you fed me, thirsty and you gave me a drink , I was a stranger and you received me in your homes, naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you took care of me, in prison and you visited me*" (v 35 & 36). *The righteous* will then answer him "*When Lord did we ever see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you a drink ? When did we ever see you a stranger and welcome you in our*

*homes, or naked and clothe you? When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you? The King will reply 'I tell you whenever you did this for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it for me!' (v 37-40). Carter put each of these needs and actions into a verse in the hymn which begins.. **'When I needed a neighbour were you there, were you there.'***

(StF 256) Each of the verses concluding with the refrain.....'**And the creed and the colour and the name won't matter. were you there?**'

This year is therefore the 80th Anniversary of this hymn described by one hymnologist as 'love without limits'.

I return to my opening theme of school steps and two lines from Hymn 476 which remind us that our life is a pilgrimage and in verse 3 where Carter writes: '*As I travel through the bad and good, Keep me travelling the way I should.*'

'To live on through his songs will indeed fulfil Sydney's dreams. For the last five years of his life, the mists of Alzheimer's Disease gradually closed in and he was lovingly cared for by his wife who interpreted him to others. The past gradually receded into the strange land of lost memory. He died on 13th March 2004.' (from the Obituary in The Guardian written by his friend Paul Ostereicher) .

Allen Steel, September 2025.

"Heavenly Father, September is the month of new starts for so many. New starts can be exciting, but they can also be daunting. We don't always know what to expect and sometimes we feel as if we are on our own in a strange new place, or situation. Help us to know that, as your people, we are never alone. You promised, through Jesus, to be with us always and You gave us Your Holy Spirit to empower us. In some ways every day is a new start – a new gift from You. As we unwrap the gift of each new day, this September, encourage us to receive it confidently and expectantly. Help us to know that we can do all things, through Christ Jesus, who strengthens us. We can! In Jesus' name, Amen."

Holiday Club Day



Although we could not offer a week of activities, we did have a very successful day in August. The theme 'was: 'God's Creatures Great and Small' and we were able to provide an extended day, from 9.30 – 4pm. 41 children attended, and we ended up with a waiting list! The day, led by Gemma Player, included storytelling, prayers and reflections in the church, as well as craft, cooking and games. The most exciting event was the visit of live animals in the afternoon. (See Back and front covers.) As well as a snake and chameleon, the children saw: tree frogs, a bearded dragon, a hissing cockroach and gerbils. We are very grateful to the number of people able to help on the day which made it a memorable day for all the children, and we received many messages from parents.





"Thank you so much for a lovely day - * and * loved it and want to know when the next one is."

"Thank you so much today. * and * had good fun today, especially with the animals. The cookies have been demolished! With great appreciation."



"Just like to say a huge thank you for yesterday. * and * had such a lovely time. They came out full of stories and smiles. They absolutely loved the animals. Thank you to all the team."

Young People - Near and Far

3 Generate 3rd – 5th October: A group from the circuit, including two young people from Winchester, will be attending the weekend in Birmingham this year. We keep them in our prayers.

Zak Njeru will be leading new groups for those 13-18 and 18-35 (p. 5)

Four Young People will be confirmed at Leyton Trinity Church on 7th September including 3 young helpers from our Holiday Club last year.

Congratulations to those who have received their exam results. We pray for all young people moving on to a new school, college, and future opportunities.

Olive's School For many years we have collected 20p coins towards lunches for the children at the school. In 2024/5 we were able to send £445! Michael, from the school, sends his heartfelt thanks to friend's in Winchester for their continued generosity and support. Food prices in Kenya have also risen drastically so our gifts will ensure the children get a square meal.

Our Young Church on Sunday

There are activities for the under 3's in the church, by the Hub. Those over 3 go out for sessions in Room 2 and the Hub. Currently, the older group, Biscuit Club, only meet by arrangement, but weekly provision provides for those aged 3-13 in Cookie Club.

The service starts at 10.30 and there is a children's action song before the young people go to their groups. It is a video which children and those 'young at heart' can learn and join in with during the month. So come early!



N.B: As our Young Church has grown in recent months, we are looking for people to support the groups, or even to lead occasionally. Please speak to one of the leaders if you feel you could help.





OUR MISSION

We are a church at the heart of Highams Park which seeks to discern and follow God's direction. Our aim is to proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour through the life of the church and outreach to the community. We promote worship and fellowship enabling us to grow towards God. We are an inclusive church where all are welcome.

OUR STEWARDS: Senior Steward: Janet Dawe
Stewards: Pat Ovenden and Hazel Mathews Carol & Dumisami Moyo

OUR SAFEGUARDING TEAM: - led by Jean Norton

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE OCTOBER NEWSLETTER
by Monday 22nd September -jdent7@gmail.com or **07751603883**

This newsletter is available to download as a PDF from our website.