

July 2014

Dear Brothers and Sisters

I can hardly believe it but the end of my first year with you approaches. They say in our training that it should be a year of listening and assessing churches and community. Forgive me if, in my enthusiasm, there have also been quite a few new things! It has been a blessing to start my ministry with you.

As we enter the summer I find that it is busier than ever. I naïvely hoped that after Pentecost things would be quieter but actually the joy of many special events emerge in this summer season including:

On June 29th at St John we have the first ever **circuit Sunday Funday**. This will be a new feature in circuit life and brings together all the young people from our circuit junior churches to share in worship, creativity, games and food. This will show our young people that they are not alone in believing in God or in going to church. **Please pray** for our young people – that they may meet new friends and be encouraged in their faith. The theme of the morning will be ‘God has a purpose for young lives’ and will be explore the story of young David – called by God when he was apparently too young, too small, with no armour and no army training and yet he faced Goliath and saved God’s people.

July will be a season of celebration in some of our churches. **On July 6 at Goffs Oak at 6.30pm** we will have the **dedication and celebration of the completion of the main stained glass window**. We welcome Rev Kathleen Richardson to preach and the mayor of Broxbourne to unveil the plaque. This event is part of a series of activities over the next few years as we approach 2018 and the celebration of 150 years of Methodist presence in Goffs Oak. All are welcome and **please pray** that we will have a full church, a good sing and above all that people, especially visitors, will be touched by the gospel.

On July 13th at 6.30pm we will be having a **Summer Praise service at Ordnance Road. Members will share favourite hymns and a word of testimony about God’s love and faithfulness**. All are welcome so please come if you can as it would be a joy to have a full church.

Meanwhile at Goffs Oak and Ponders End we have had a **summer Bible study series** from Christian

Aid called the ‘Jesus Agenda.’ This inspiring material has drawn us into Luke 4:14-21 and Jesus’s first sermon which sets the context of his whole ministry and is sometimes called ‘the Nazareth Manifesto.’ Jesus quotes from the prophet Isaiah saying:



¹⁸ ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.’

Here we see Jesus proclaiming salvation on a global scale in the language of justice and society. This is a powerful reminder that our faith is not ‘individual’ and indeed Wesley reminds us there is no such thing as ‘individual holiness.’ The good news of our salvation from sin by faith through Christ’s sacrifice means nothing without the context of a just society that is concerned for the poor and the marginalised. This is the ‘Good News’ in action rather than words making the Kingdom present today!

So a busy time and in the midst of it all sad news from central Methodism of falling numbers in our Churches. For some this will generate angst and uncertainty that can be draining if we lose sight of the 2000 year perspective of God’s faithfulness and remember that the Church continues, even if movements come and go. ‘God is not dead’ as a young person said in a movie recently and neither are we! So let us rejoice in this day which the Lord has made and be glad in it.

May God bless us all as we seek to live humbly and faithfully trusting our lives, our community and our Church into his hands.

God bless you.

Alan Combes

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