



ASTCOTE METHODIST CHURCH

News & Notices-April 2015

Mon 30th March 7.30pm Holy Week Service

Led by Rev Romeo Pedro

5th April Easter Family Celebration

(Easter Breakfast 9.30am - see page 4)

10.30 Mr John Atkin : HC

3pm Mrs Wendy Manley : Eastcote

12th April

10.30am Mr Paul Barford

3pm Mr Adrian Hicks : Eastcote

On Duty at 10.30am

April-Gulliford/Sue/Roz

May-Hysom/Boenke

19th April

10.30am Family Service : Rev Alan Sharp

3pm Rev Romeo Pedro : Eastcote

26th April

10.30am Rev Romeo Pedro

3pm Mr John Hutcherson : Eastcote

Ministers letter for April from Rev Romeo Pedro:

A short time ago, a Hungarian couple came to one of our churches in the Circuit – they couldn't speak much English. Upon the advice of one of our stewards they returned the next Sunday and there was someone who advised them where to go for a Hungarian speaking congregation. To my surprise they said that they wanted to return to our church (even with the language difficulty). That witnessed loudly, I think, to the hospitality that that church offers. In fact, I understand that that church now includes 17 nationalities in its fold.

Henri Nouwen said that **one of the major spiritual movements in a Christian's life is to go from hostility to hospitality.**

In the Bible, the original Greek word for "hospitality" means "love of strangers." The Bible contains references to a number of exemplary hosts. **Abraham** was venerated as a model for hosts: Genesis 18 tells how Abraham and Sarah were blessed with a child after they welcomed divine strangers. **Ruth** (Deuteronomy 23:3-6) **and Rahab** (Joshua 2 and 6), as unlikely hostesses, are precursors of the Good Samaritan, a person from a despised group of people who exemplifies hospitality. **Joseph, the father of Jesus**, is an example of a person who lived out the values of hospitality and justice. Had Joseph not welcomed Jesus into his house of lineage, Emmanuel ("God is with us") would have been blocked from entering God's house on earth.

For **Jesus**, hospitality meant not only welcoming strangers, but also doing justice. In Jesus' parable of the two sons (Luke 15:11-32), the father shows hospitality to both sons, the one who has stayed with him and the one who has returned after wasting his inheritance on riotous living. He encourages the older son, who is angry about the good treatment of his prodigal brother, to be hospitable, too. The host does not judge whether or not the guest is worthy to be loved and helped, but simply provides hospitality.

According to the Gospel of Matthew, the **New Creation of God** avoids judgmental/exclusionary ways of relating to people by offering an ethic of hospitality and justice. In the ancient world where Jesus walked and talked, society established boundaries to protect itself from "contamination." Among the outcasts were persons with leprosy and other skin diseases.

Lepers had to be announced by the words, "Unclean, unclean!" and lived alone or in small groups separated from the rest of the community (Matthew 8:1-3). Into such a world entered Jesus. He reached out and embraced not only lepers and other outcasts, but the whole world. Into the world today comes Jesus. The modern world is very different from the ancient one. Yet, in terms of human hopes and fears, today's global community is so similar. Society still stigmatizes and discriminates against groups of people. Into the contemporary world, the Divine Healer brings the same gospel message of compassion, love, forgiveness, and justice as he did two thousand years ago. Jesus reaches out and embraces the whole world.

He invites us to join the household of God and asks us to offer hospitality to all. The One who says on Good Friday: "Woman, here is your Son. Son, here is your Mother" (John 19: 26-27), "calls us out to meet new brothers and sisters, new mothers and fathers and new sons and daughters" ... and in so doing we will create a "new family that violates all old boundaries of exclusion and defensiveness" (Walter Brueggemann). The one who is the Resurrection and the Life shows us how to live and to help others to live.

My prayer is that we shall emulate these Biblical - and Jesus examples – that our churches shall become places of welcome and embrace. I salute the example set by one of our churches in this regard (I am simply using them as an example and I am sure that this is happening all over the Circuit).

Prayer: Dear God, help us to become more hospitable, to open the doors of our hearts to you, to find more ways in which we can open the doors of our churches to all people. Teach us to be holy, to reach out to all those who have been created and loved by you. Amen.



Romeo.

News & Dates

Fairtrade Afternoon Tea Saturday 7th March—a great success with over 50 people coming along and £180 raised for church funds. Thank you for your support

Easter Eggsplasion 10-12.15 Good Friday

3rd April Easter Workshop for children aged 4-11 years who are at school. Booking essential. Contact John on 830907

Easter Breakfast on Easter Sunday 9.30am

Look forward to everyone joining us for a 'Continental' Easter Breakfast before our Easter Celebration Service at 10.30am. Croissants and hot cross buns will be served. (Feel free to bring some cereal with you if you would like that as well.) If you haven't already signed up please let Ann know on 830907 if you would like to join us.

Looking further ahead

Church Council Monday 20th April 7.30pm

Plant Sale & Afternoon Tea Saturday 6th June

Messy Church Saturday 13th June

Our Offering on Easter Sunday will be for the Methodist World Mission Fund ... Here is how it all started

Each year, the Methodist Church holds an Easter offering dedication service. The tradition of the Easter Offering dates back to 1883 when women in Manchester collected £32 from 'Christmas pennies' at family gatherings on Christmas Day at lunch for Missionary work overseas. In March 1884, the London Districts distributed Easter envelopes and collecting bags asking for a penny a head and just over £100 was collected.

From this success, the idea grew and by 1900 the amount totalled £1,655. In 1903 Easter offerings were extended to all country chapels. 'Let us bear in mind,' they wrote, 'the importance of the "Littles"'.

Through gifts great and small, the Easter Offering has become a significant feature of the World Church. In 1986, the Bicentenary year, it totalled nearly £200,000. Throughout the country, effort focuses on the annual envelope collection for the Fund for World Mission through the Easter Offering and the associated service of dedication.

This reflects the long history of commitment to overseas work by the women of Methodism, and the recognition that local specific relationships with overseas projects and World Church in Britain partnerships are given broader meaning by a national focus. The theme and service are different every year.

Lunch Club - is for the retired and will usually be held on the 2nd Tuesday each month. Maureen Corbett can be contacted for more details on 830296.

The Well Group - An ecumenical ladies group which offers a time to socialise and share for Christian women or those interested in the Christian faith. Meeting 12-2pm, including a simple lunch. Contact Alison Brierley if you would like to come along on 830770

Next Meeting

Thursday 30th April

Monday Club (Reception, Years 1 & 2)

'Sunday School' after school 3.15-4.15pm

Wednesday Bible Club 'Friends & Heroes'

12.30-1pm (yrs 3-6)

For more information please speak to John Atkin on 830907. Both groups held at Pattishall Primary School

Bible Study/House Group

We plan to continue this later in April on

Tuesdays 7.30pm at Steve & Wendy Boenke's, 4 Littlefield Close, Eastcote. All are welcome

Faith Sharing Course

Do you find it hard to speak to others about your faith?

A four week course will be starting in May, led by Rev Romeo Pedro, to help us tackle this problem.

The dates are Tuesdays 7.30-8.30pm, May 12th, 19th, 26th and 2nd June and the course will be held at Towcester Road Methodist Church, Far Cotton, Northampton.



It's not too late to sponsor Malcolm!

Malcolm is entering the Swimathon in April 17-19, aiming to swim 5K in aid of Marie Curie Cancer Care. That's 200 lengths of the pool at Towcester!

You can sponsor him via the website: www.swimathon.org.uk (then click on 'get involved', then 'sponsor', then add 'Malcolm Hysom').

Thank you

Northampton Methodist Circuit Team Ministry

Superintendent: Rev Tina Swire

Rev John Marriott

Rev Romeo Pedro

Rev. Phil Snelson

Deacon Richard Beckett

Contact point is Circuit Office: 01604 721 908

At Park Avenue Methodist Church

Northampton

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**To book the Chapel rooms** please ring Kate Stretton on 830115

Please also contact Kate if you would like to place flowers in the Chapel in memory of a loved one or to celebrate a birthday, anniversary etc.

For items or suggestions for this newsletter  
please contact::

Ann Atkin, Church Secretary on 830907

[ann.atkin51@btinternet.com](mailto:ann.atkin51@btinternet.com)