



ASTCOTE METHODIST CHURCH

News & Notices—March 2016

6th March

9-10am Prayer for the Community

10.30am Mr Paul Barford

On Duty at 10.30am

March— Stretton/Bell

April— Gulliford/Sue/Roz

13th March

10.30am The Congregation

20th March—Family Service

10.30am Mr John Atkin

Monday 21st March—Holy Week Service

7.30pm Rev John Marriott

27th March—Easter Day Family Celebration

10.30am Rev Romeo Pedro : HC

Eastcote Baptist Chapel

3pm Service on 1st Sunday in the month

6th March—Rev Tina Swire

www.astcotemethodistchurch.org.uk

Ministers Letter March 2016 from Rev Romeo Pedro

My dear brothers and sisters, I have lately been reflecting on the parable of the Prodigal Son or as other more accurately call it the Parable of the Waiting Father. The parable is one of death and resurrection – as the Father later confirmed: “This son of mine was dead but is now alive again.”

Not a single character in the story have names. Their identity comes through their relationships: father, son and brother. To discontinue the relationship is to lose your identity. To lose your identity is to die. No one is an island. As an African, I was raised with the philosophy that “I am who I am because we are”.

Death in the scriptures is not reduced to whether we have a pulse or not. The younger son was still breathing but he was dead because he was no longer living in relationship with his father and brother. He was tempted by the illusion of independence and the lie that you can live a separate selfish life and still live.

Both sons in different ways separate themselves from the Father – or as Miroslav Volf says they try and “un-son” themselves. The younger one travels to a distant land while the older son remains outside in anger. Both cause the Father grief. Grieving - for he has lost a loved one.

When the child returns to relationship he is resurrected. He is born again. We are born again when we live life lovingly (in relationship) again.

The other day I read an extract from a beautiful book called: “Father Joe”. In it the author records a time when he came to Father Joe for confession after many, many years of being in a “distant land” and with “the pigs”. After he shared some of the gory details about his life, Father Joe says to him: *These are great imperfections, dear. But they're not what you really want to say, are they?*” He was right... there was something but I couldn't quite reach down far enough to find it. “Say what's in your heart now, dear.”

“I seem incapable of love, Father Joe. Utterly incapable of feeling it, even thinking it. Even wanting it. No, that's not true. I want to love, terribly. But it won't come ... I hate love. It feels the way a sin used to. Like when you got a present as a kid and for no reason at all you'd smash it into little pieces...”

“Tony dear, you will only be able to love when you understand how much you are loved. You are loved, dear, with a limitless... fathomless... all-embracing love.”

This month we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus: that Jesus is alive and that Jesus is Lord. And we also celebrate that **by allowing him to love us we too are resurrected to new life: to a loved life AND to a life lived lovingly.**

In the little book written in the 1970s by Martin Bell, entitled *The Way of the Wolf*, a little boy is able to hear the wind talking. The wind tells the boy: *Anything that hurts anyone hurts you. Anything that helps anyone helps you. It is not possible to gain from another's loss or to lose from another's gain. Your life is immensely important.* Paul would say they were spoken by the Spirit — God's wind of love — reminding us who we really are — we are one in all our rich diversity.

We need each other ... a gift of course that we embraced in the model of “Team Ministry” in the Northampton Circuit.

My prayer is that we shall embrace this gift of togetherness, that we shall live our mission in our togetherness – that we shall support one another in the beautiful work done through Messy Church; our involvement at Street Church; the hospitality shown through the Prayer Breakfasts and Meals; the outreach done through the Mums and Tots Groups and Film matinees; the wonderful involvement with our young people through the work of the Brigades; the number of ecumenical and inter-faith partnerships; the many prayer initiatives and Bible Studies; and the various international outreaches that our members are involved with.

I challenge you to find out about one of the aforementioned and to make a commitment to support these. I want to encourage you to reach out to a church in the Circuit that you would not normally be involved with – to show interest in and care for your brothers and sisters in the rest of the Circuit this month.

Friends, we exist in togetherness or not at all.
Grace

Romeo.

News & Dates

Looking ahead to March and 2016

Saturday 19th March Fairtrade Afternoon Tea 2-4.30pm
with Tombola, Book Stall, Fairtrade Gifts & Food etc. We already have plenty of books to sell but if you have any jigsaws they would be very welcome. There is a box in the kitchen for donations to the tombola. Helpers are needed on the day.



Please tell your friends and invite them along as we support Fairtrade and have the opportunity to welcome people to the Chapel.

Colours for the Chapel There will soon be a shortlist of colours for a final decision to be made ready for the painting to commence on 11th April.

Change of Date for Lunch Club in April

Due to the painting work Lunch Club will be a week earlier on Tuesday 5th April.

Saturday 4th June Plant Sale & Afternoon Tea 2-4.30pm

Easter Services etc.

Holy Week Service Monday 21st March 7.30pm led by Rev John Marriott at Astcote

Easter Eggsplasion Good Friday 25th March 10-12.30 Children's Workshop (Planning meeting Mon 29th Feb 7.30pm at the Chapel)

Good Friday Service 7pm at Harpole Methodist Church led by Rev John Marriott

For other Holy Week services see the Methodist Circuit Newsletter or *Around Pattishall* for local Anglican services

Easter Sunday 28th March—Continental Easter Breakfast 9.30am before service at 10.30am Please add your name to the list in the kitchen if you would like to join us.

Our Easter Offering this year will be for EVE

Previously known at Nene Valley Christian Family Refuge,

Eve continues to run a Women and Family Refuge for those in need of help escaping domestic abuse and domestic



violence. The refuge has helped **Over 2,000 women** take back their lives from abusive partners and situations. Their funding has been severely cut and without considerable support the refuge may be lost. Please give generously. If you will be away at Easter please leave your donation in a sealed envelope marked 'Eve' on the Sunday before.

Grant Received from the 'Piddington Trust'

We have been fortunate to receive £500 from the Trust towards the ongoing improvements at the Chapel. The Trust has helped us several times over the years but it is now closing the fund. Grateful thanks for their support.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS HEART ABILITY PERSONALITY EXPERIENCES

The SHAPE course continues on 1st, 8th and 15th March. We are enjoying a great meal at 7pm followed by challenging teaching as we find what our true gifts are with Rev Romeo Pedro from 7.45-9pm



We pray for those who have no peace -

for those who are troubled and torn apart by lack of self esteem
for those who torment and victimise the vulnerable.

We pray for men and women affected by violence in the home
and for those who live by violence.

We pray for those who are trafficked
and for those who organise and profit from selling other humans.

May they learn of your love
and somehow come to newness of life
even in the midst of despair.

God of mercy and love let us serve you in our world. Amen

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.

New members are welcome.

Please give Maureen a ring.

The Well Group - An ecumenical ladies group which offers a time to socialise and share a meal 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

The next meeting will be on Thurs 31st March—TBC

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

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)