



# ASTCOTE METHODIST CHURCH

*News & Notices—February 2017*

## **5th February**

9.30-10am Prayer for the Community

10.30am Rev Tina Swire (Holy Communion)

## **12th February**

10.30am Ian Harrison

## **19th February**

10.30am The Congregation

## **26th February—Family Service**

10.30am Rev Romeo Pedro

On Duty at 10.30am

Feb– Hysom/Boenke

March– Stretton/Bell

## **Eastcote Baptist Chapel**

3pm Service on 1st Sunday in the month

[www.astcotemethodistchurch.org.uk](http://www.astcotemethodistchurch.org.uk)

## **Ministers Letter February 2017 : Time for a change?**

Writing is always a challenge for me because as you know I hardly write anything down or it is just very minimal. If I have to write I like it to be inspired, it to be topical or appropriate for a time, space, people or context.

Often things come to you in the most strange of places, times of the day or even night. Sometimes it is good to go and do something completely different from the normal routine and then in those moments perhaps while we are subconsciously thinking something will come along.

Gardening, walking, painting, cycling, driving, visiting can be such activities that promote thinking in a parallel way or give totally new direction, people use the term "thinking outside of the box".

My mum Eleanor who was a thoughtful, loving and a caring lady would say, "a change is as good as a rest". She would obediently follow my dad in virtually everything, very diligently and dutifully, but it didn't stop her thinking for herself.

My mum and dad for half their working lives were shop keepers, "Open all hours". They rarely went away and if they did it was not for long. Mum and dad never retired, their little business was their life and they had little room or activity time for reflection. However mum would always say "a change is as good as a rest".

I find myself in a strange and unusual place. I can't remember having anymore than about two weeks off at any one, sickness or holiday. Even when I was unemployed I was walking the streets looking for work. So one month's holiday followed by three months Sabbatical needs a little bit of reprogramming and new thinking on my part, having all this space and time that I have never had before could go to my head or just be frittered away. God would not be pleased about either of those.

Time is a precious and rare commodity that is finite while we inhabit this remarkable planet. So my mum's words of wisdom come to mind, "a change is as good as a rest". I have guarded against people trying to fill it for me. I want to shape it and I want to use it from my own resourcefulness.

Often when we have space we want, and are inclined, to fill it, perhaps not thinking what we are filling it with.

Most things are better with having a little bit of structure and purpose. For me I have known for a long time that my body needs refreshment, to be good, healthy and fit otherwise life can be limited. Health is one of the most important things we have and possess, mental, physical and spiritual, and often cannot be bought with money.

I firmly believe we are very three dimensional. I base this upon the life of Jesus, his mental capacity, to think on his feet, his physical ability to endure hard and long days and the agony of the Cross and his spiritual energy from God in the form of the Holy Spirit.

I also see this time as a season similar to that of Spring. The things I want to see and like about Spring are the daylight hours increasing in both length and brightness, the temperature rising and the warmth in the sun.

Signs of new life in plants and the birds, more activity in nature with a coming vibrancy, I also look for colour to return well exemplified in Snowdrops and Blue Bells. I look forward to planting seeds and raising plants. I should feel more connected to the earth, closer to creation.

At sometime in our history we were more connected to the seasons. Winter could be long and hard, little activity, but activity in a different way. Summer brings the bloom of creation and autumn the industrious harvesting.

I believe that the way our world and society is structured and driven along some important aspects have been weaned out or lost completely and we as people are missing out on some important life giving aspects.

World travellers have a saying "travel light, travel simple". A dose of rigour, discipline and perhaps ruthlessness will be needed in this different

One thing for me needs to go alongside all of these is a good Spring clean, both materially and spiritually. Jesus refers to this in the image of the Vine, pruning and clearing unhelpful stuff, restoring the image and fitness of the vine to produce better quality of fruit.

It is easy to accumulate but much more difficult to clear things out, wanting to keep things even though they have not been used at all.

World travellers have a saying "travel light, travel simple". A dose of rigour, discipline and perhaps ruthlessness will be needed in this different time. This will enable restoration, new life, life with colour and with vibrancy and then the words of Jesus will come true.

Jesus said "I have come to give you life and life in all its fullness!"

Every blessing in Jesus,

**Rev John.**

Rev John Marriott

Rev John will be on Sabbatical during February, March, April & May.



## *News & Dates*

### **Fairtrade Afternoon Tea Saturday 4th March 2-4.30pm**

Helpers on the day and items for the tombola very welcome.

**Card Workshop Saturday 11th March 2-4pm** at the Chapel with Kate Stretton—book a place by ringing Kate on 830115.

**Messy Church Saturday 25th March 2-4.30pm** at the Parish Hall—helpers always welcome—please speak to John Atkin on 830907.

### **Tuesday evenings : Worship Time 7.30-8.30pm**

Everyone is welcome to join a few of the musicians and other members of the congregation for a time of worship. Arrive any time from 7pm.

### **Help Children Learn to Read**

Pattishall Primary School would welcome anyone who could spare an hour or so on a regular basis to sit and help young children learn to read. This could be a rewarding time for both the helper and the child. Please speak to John Atkin or ring Pattishall School, 830301 and ask to speak to Mr Wood (Head Teacher).

### **News from Church Council**

We welcome Jeanne & David Gulliford as our new Property Stewards.

If a Pastoral Visit is needed due to illness or any other reason Rev Tina Swire should be contacted on 01604 758637, but if necessary any of our Ministers can be asked. Their telephone numbers appear on the Circuit Service Plan.



Loving God, when life is busy and the pressure is on,  
it is easy to feel hemmed in by the expectations of other people  
and the demands of daily living.  
Yet, in Christ, you promise us freedom.  
Remind me of the freedom that is to be found in knowing him.  
Help me, by your Spirit,  
to see beyond everything that seems to get in the way  
of me being the person you made me to be  
and doing the things you have for me to do.  
Open my ears to the cries of all those around me,  
who are denied the freedom they deserve,  
and give me the courage to speak up and to speak out for them,  
that all may enjoy the freedom Christ came to bring. Amen.

*Gill Newton, Sheffield District Chair*  
[www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk)

**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

Thursday 23rd February—Sue Titheridge : Reflections

**Monday Club (Reception, Years 1 & 2)**

**'Sunday School' after school 3.15-4.15pm at Pattishall Primary School**

Organised and run by John Atkin and Jackie Bell.

## **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.

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For items or suggestions for this newsletter  
please contact::

Ann Atkin, Church Secretary on 830907

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