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place early on a Sunday morning, and it may be that we need to look very carefully at times when we offer new things, in order to make sure that they fit with what the members of our community want and need.

A number of our circuits are involved in various community partnerships, and have been much encouraged by the way in which community organisations respond once they realise how much voluntary work the church does in their area.

We have also found in at least a couple of our circuits that covenants with Anglican deaneries have enabled exciting work to take place because Christians are now able to operate together in new ways in their communities.

We are appointing more deacons as we discover how to use diaconal ministry in new housing developments.


Other circuits have found other ways to respond to new housing in their areas. As a result, they are in touch with more people in the community than would normally come to what is usually referred to as "traditional Methodist worship".

New ways of worshipping, especially during the week, are generally very well received. However, it is also the case that traditional worship held during the week will attract more people than tend to turn up on Sundays.

Please be encouraged by all these stories and recognise that if we are prepared to ask questions about what our communities need, the stories can be repeated almost everywhere in our district. The only time it does not happen is when people say things like, "This will see me out", or "We don't need to change anything at all because I like it this way."

Alison Tomlin can be contacted at altomlin@fish.co.uk

District News

The **Methodist Church** 
Northampton District
July 2007

STORIES TO INSPIRE

Is the church dying? According to Rev. Alison Tomlin, chair of the Northampton District, it is not. Here, Alison offers evidence to support her view.

I believe the Methodist Church has now turned a corner. Yes, it is true that the institutions of the church (not just Methodist) are crumbling. This is because they were designed for a different world. However, it is also the case that across our district and, I believe, other districts as well, the Methodist Church is beginning quietly to grow.

We may not be making many members, partly because our society tends not to be as interested in membership as it once was. However, in all sorts of ways we are in contact with more people, and more people are involved in worship and the activities that the church offers.

The following examples come from circuits right across the district; if you want to know more, please get in touch with me.

In one of our rural circuits we have actually made new members, and some of those new members are teenagers. This is in a church where the previous membership was as elderly as is the case in many of our congregations. One of our town circuits has also made new members, and is seeing new children taking part in worship as well as the weekly activities.

One of our chapels held a men's breakfast; at least half those who came had no previous contact with the church. The event took

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OF PODCASTS AND POWERPOINTS

Websites, press releases, newsletters, magazines, posters, podcasts, PowerPoint, leaflets and banners.

These are only some of the ways through which churches, circuits and districts communicate. If you are already involved in such things, or would like to learn more, you are invited to come to a communications day at Methodist Church House in central London, on Friday 12 October.

Workshops will explain how to get the best out of modern communication tools. Areas to be covered will include copyright issues, making the best use of your website, and what resources and support Methodism's connexional staff team can provide.

Whether you are only looking, just beginning, or are an old hand, an informative and entertaining day is promised. And it is free, including lunch. To book, email Lynne Newland: newlandl@methodistchurch.org.uk.

FROM THE DISTRICT EXECUTIVE

From 2008, a new process of circuit reviews will be compulsory. This is especially important if application is to be made for external funding. A pilot scheme is running in one circuit in the district to try to make the review process a positive experience and not merely another piece of admin. imposed from on high.

When it met in June, the executive wished the District Mission & Development Officer, Deacon Andrew Carter, well for his move to Leicester as City Centre Missioner. Andrew's work in the district has made it easier to obtain permission for the full time post of Director of Mission. This September, synod will welcome Rev. Tim Woolley to this new post.

POVERTY & HOMELESSNESS ACTION WEEK

Poverty and Homelessness Action Week (28 Jan - 3 Feb 2008) will be a major opportunity for local churches to discover and engage with poverty and social justice issues within their own communities.

The organisers are encouraging local churches or ecumenical groups to join with other community groups in holding "poverty hearings" to listen to the voices and stories of people experiencing poverty in their own areas. Hearings could vary from a short neighbourhood event to a full day city hearing organised by a consortium of organisations.

To support this process, a series of regional training events will be held during the autumn. In the Northampton District, training courses have been booked to take place in Leicester and Milton Keynes.

More information is available at www.church-poverty.org.uk.

MHA JOB OPPORTUNITY

MHA (Methodist Homes for the Aged) wishes to appoint a representative for the Northampton District. The post is a voluntary one.

If this is for you, then you will want to be involved in MHA's mission "to improve the quality of life for older people, inspired by Christian concern". You will also have an interest in the work of MHA and be prepared to help communicate information effectively throughout the district.

Previous involvement with MHA work is not essential but enthusiasm and commitment are important. You will need transport to make occasional visits around the district. You will receive full support, including travel and other expenses, to assist you in the role.

Volunteers have always been vital to the work of MHA. Will you help MHA make a difference?

***For a copy of the role description and to find out more, please contact Les Sudron, Head of Fundraising, MHA Care Group, Brooklands Court, Tunstall Road, Leeds, LS11 5HL
Tel: 0113 271 5805; Fax: 0113 271 5848; email: les.sudron@mha.org.uk.***