

Coming Up Soon

Worship Consultation at 8pm	20 February
Homeless Sunday	23 February
Ash Wednesday Service at 8pm	26 February
Methodist Women in Britain Quiet Day	29 February
Lent Bible Studies commence	2 March
Midweek Meditation Service at 12.15pm	4 March
Marriage and Relationships Discussion at 2pm	4 March
Messy Vintage at 2.30pm	7 March
Messy Church at 4pm	15 March
Marriage and Relationships Discussion at 8pm	16 March
Buster's Band Concert	28 March
Midweek Meditation Service at 12.15pm	1 April
Maundy Thursday Communion Service at 8pm	9 April
Good Friday Service at 10.30am	10 April
Messy Vintage at 2.30pm	11 April
Easter Sunday Communion Services at 9am and 10.30am	12 April
Messy Church at 4pm	19 April

Contact us at janegooding@sky.com,
marykateknapman@hotmail.com and annie@annick.co.uk or leave
 any articles for Jane, Mary and Ann's attention in the Church Office

Loughton Methodist Church

260 High Road
 Loughton
 Essex
 IG10 1RB
 0208 502 3071
administrator@loughtonmethodist.org.uk



@loughtonmethodistchurch



@loughtonmethodistchurch

www.loughtonmethodist.org.uk

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LMC Life

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LMC celebrates Toddler Church's 15th Birthday, says goodbye and see you soon to Glynis, and enjoys a Vision Day together

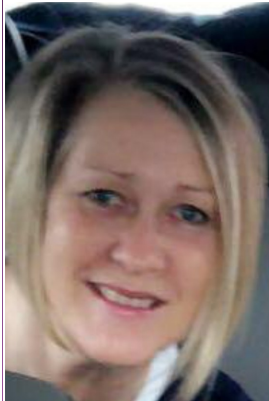
Welcome to the February issue of *LMC Life*. Read on to find out more about this year's Lent theme, the new Church Manager Cat Davies and the 20/20 Vision Day. We explain how you can take part in the nationwide discussion on marriage and relationships as Methodists, plus we ask Andrew King to tell us more about the Buster's Band concert at LMC next month.

On 1 March the new LMC brand launches, so look out for the new logo and strapline around the building, as well as a new-look *LMC Life* from the next issue.

As usual, there's lots going on here at LMC!

Sue's News

This year's Lent theme



Rev. Sue Creighton

It only seems like yesterday that we were beginning our Advent Season and celebrating Christmas: now we're approaching Lent, the time when we prepare for Holy Week and Easter.

Lent provides an opportunity for us to focus more deeply on who Jesus is, what he came to do and how we as Christians are called to follow him and live out our faith in the world today. It is a period of prayer, of self-examination, of reading God's word and of seeking to grow in our faith and devotion to Christ.

This year our Lent theme is Jesus: Life Mission Community. We've already adopted these three words as our statement of identity and purpose, and as we launch the new brand on 1 March they will become more familiar and be more visible.

But we want to move beyond just seeing these words around church or understanding them solely as being relevant to LMC and our local situation. We want to explore them in the context of Jesus' life, mission and community so that we can root all that we are and all that we do in him and understand further how everything flows from him.

Lent starts on 1 March and all our services during Lent will follow this theme. There will also be opportunities to explore the theme more deeply in our Bible studies on Monday mornings and Wednesday evenings, and we will be encouraging everyone to consider why the life, mission and community that Jesus lives and gives matters to us today.

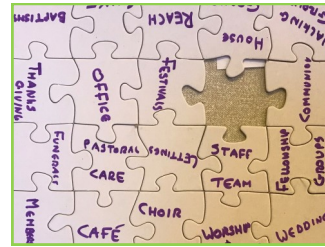
Lent

Life Mission Community

that particular heading. We have since fed these back to the communications group, as this will help in the organisation of the new LMC website. One table referred to 'a package of good things' – it is clear that there's a lot going on at LMC!

.....
: 'Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to :
: completion until the day of Christ Jesus...' (Philippians 1:6)
:

As we put the jigsaws together we realised a piece was missing from each of them:



this represented the 'missing piece' – something LMC could do (or stop doing) in the future in each of these areas to make them even better. The groups then prioritised three improvements under each heading. Common themes were already emerging – an increased focus on Churches Together in Loughton, working with Trinity Debden, improving our offering

to the 20-40 generation (particularly those who are single or don't have children), getting out into the community more, welcome area/café development, clearer signage, small groups/discipleship, and prayer.

Finally we brought everything back to the reason we are here – 'his story' – remembering that everything we do is to glorify God both here and in the wider world. Sue led time of prayer through the church building, stopping to pray in each area, with a focus on the activities that go on in each. The day finished with a rousing rendition of 'In Christ Alone' before we enjoyed a meal together.

Future work

The Vision Day was just the start of the conversation, and discussion will continue in the weeks to come. If you weren't able to come to the day itself but you have some ideas, please do speak to Sue, Maggie Buttress, Ed Maule or Mary Knapman. They make up the steering group and will be working to refresh the church's strategic aims and objectives, putting life, mission and community at the heart of who we are and what we do. But the idea is not that our identity is consigned to a 'vision document' that only a few read but that it's something that we all, as a church family, live out daily for the greater glory of God.



20/20 Vision Day

You've probably heard quite a bit about the new brand identity, and specifically the strapline 'Life Mission Community', over the past few months...

The 20/20 Vision Day was designed to tease out what we understand by Life Mission Community; which areas of church life come under each of these categories; how they help to show what's important to us as a church; and how we can use them going forwards to make it really clear who we are and what we're about.

Activities

We began with a 5-minute ice-breaker – building something relating to LMC from recycled materials. The *Mission: Impossible* soundtrack and accompanying clock counting down on the screens piled the pressure on to our groups, but they remained focused and turned out creations that even Sculpture Club leader John Hart agreed were intriguing. There was a common thread to the groups' builds – of course the church building and the cross featured strongly, but they also used the same adjectives to describe what they'd created, talking about the church being 'open', 'inclusive', 'loving'. Many mentioned the two-way relationship between the church and the community.



We framed the main activities around the concept of 'My story... our story... his story'. We started out thinking about the amazing things God had done for each of us individually at LMC – whether we'd been here for 50 years or for 5 minutes. This was a great opportunity to celebrate God's goodness in each of our lives – and it was wonderful to share stories of faith around the tables.

'I remember the days of old; I meditate on all that you have done; I ponder the work of your hands...' (Psalm 143)

Moving on to 'Our story' as a church here in Loughton, each table was given a blank jigsaw in a bag marked either 'Life', 'Mission' or 'Community'. Our task was to write something on each piece which relates to an activity the church already does under

Meet: Cat Davies

Just before Christmas LMC said a fond farewell to Glynis Reeve after four years' hard work in the Church Office. Her farewell was marked in typical style with coffee and cake in the Welcome Area.

Then at the beginning of January we said hello to our new Church Manager Cat Davies. As well as getting to grips with her new role, trying to remember the names of hirers, members and office visitors we asked Cat to write a piece for *LMC Life* to introduce herself.



My family

I'm married to Tom and have two wonderful children – Odette who is 7, and Osian (a Welsh name, pronounced Osh-anne) who is 5. We've been in Loughton for six years and it's very quickly become home.

Pre-LMC

I worked in the City before I had a family and enjoyed the hours and the travel. Children changed me and I'm lucky enough to be a mum in a generation with access to technology that enables me to work from home around my children. I started my own digital consultancy business when my son was 18 months and my daughter was 3. I worked for lots of different brands, from MTV to Microsoft, but the juggle was very much real. So I moved last year to a part-time role at the House of Commons and was lucky enough to get the experience of a General Election – which tipped me into applying to work at the church!

Messy Church

I started attending LMC through Messy Church, which is something my family is so grateful for. To have my children want to go to church is a brilliant thing and I love how it introduces quite difficult-to-understand Christian stories and concepts so simply and makes them so accessible to children through craft. Plus we all get to eat lovely food together and the meal together gives us all a special time to connect with the wider community and the church family.

Attending LMC

From Messy Church we started attending Holiday Club and then the 10.30 family service.

What have I discovered working here?

I'm really enjoying learning about all the amazing groups and work that comes and goes through the doors of this church, and also the really interesting work that our members do outside the church in the wider community. It's a bit of a cliché but there is so much work being done, and it is really inspiring to be around day in, day out.

What am I looking forward to?

Being able to make a decent hot chocolate – something that a few café customers can attest is not currently in my skillset! And perhaps more importantly becoming a useful and helpful part of the church.

Thanks to Cat for telling us a bit about her story. The evening service is currently exploring the theme of 'stories' – it's also a Methodist Church focus for 2020. You will be hearing a bit more about the theme in the coming weeks, but if you want to find out more, visit <https://thestoryproject.org.uk/> or come along to the evening service at 6pm every second and fourth Sunday of the month.

God in Love Unites Us: Discussion Forums

We'll be holding two open forums, 4 March 2-3.30pm and 16 March 8-9.30pm, to discuss the Methodist Church Report on Marriage and Relationships. In 2016 a Methodist Church task group was set up to explore as Methodist Christians how we can best live in relationships today and how we can best live faithfully as Christians in these relationships. The main focus of the group was to look particularly at matters of divorce, gender equality and same-sex sexuality.

Churches across the Methodist Connexion are being asked to discuss the report and its recommendations and to feed back to District Synods in April. After this, opportunities for feedback will no longer be available.

To prepare for the discussion you can download the full report and a study guide and prayer guide at www.methodist.org.uk or contact Cat or Jane in the office for copies.

As we prepare to discuss the report we pray for respect, tolerance and a reminder of a God who unites us in his love. The report quotes from John Wesley's 'Catholic Spirit' sermon, which states: 'though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike?'

Spotlight On: Buster's Band

Do you fancy hearing some toe-tapping music at LMC on Saturday 28 March?

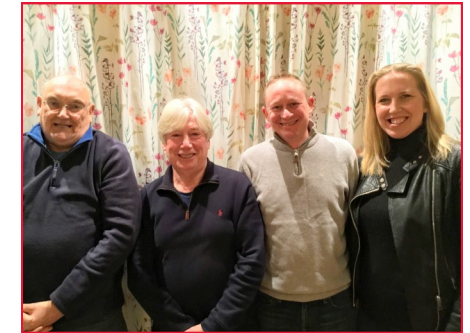
We hope so, because Buster's Band will be playing at 7.30pm in aid of Whitechapel Mission, who have been helping the homeless in the East End of London for over 140 years. And their help is needed in 2020 just as much as it was in 1876.

The amount of help that Whitechapel Mission has been able to offer is simply mind-boggling. Last year, 108,398 breakfasts were served, an average of 297 a day. And nearly 5,700 people were helped in various ways. You can find out more at www.whitechapel.org.uk.

During the last five years Buster's Band has raised about £2,500 for different charities, including Shoeboxes, Haven House and Action for Children. The band members met when they started playing for the church band at Theydon Bois Baptist Church many years ago. After we went our separate ways from there, we decided to stay together just for the enjoyment of playing many different kinds of music, including rock, country, blues and some of our own songs.

It occurred to us that we could do something to help the community by occasionally playing charity concerts.

Add in the concert celebrating the church building's 30th birthday and a few private gigs and you'll see we've been quite busy!



For the concert on 28 March you can reserve seats at <https://tinyurl.com/bustersband28march2020> and we hope you will feel able to contribute at least £5 per adult and £2.50 for under 16s on the night. There will be a non-alcoholic raffle involving indescribable prizes (that's because we have no idea yet what they will be!) and refreshments during the interval. And you'll be getting two bands for the price of one, as Duncan Haslam's duo, Concierge, will be opening the second half.

If you'd like to come but you're not sure about using the link, just let Sarah King know and she will reserve your seat.

So please make a note in your diaries – you don't want to miss this, and what's more, we don't want you to miss it!

See you there.