

**Hinckley Methodist
Church Magazine
Looking forward to
Harvest 2026**



**Minister
Rev'd Edward Sakwe
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Dear Friends, It is September already! Tempus fugit! Speaking of things flying please support our Harvest events the first weekend in October when we will support the life saving work of the Mission Aviation Fellowship. Before then there is the MacMillan Coffee Morning in September, and the last weekend in November sees a special 'Christmas themed' Festival. As well as all the notices for the Harvest and Autumn period this issue also features some discussion of the proposed merger of Hinckley Circuit with Leicester West Circuit, so please study that and chat and pray about all of that. Best Wishes as always,

Richard Smith (Editor)

Some forthcoming dates—Harvest and Autumn season

Saturday 19th September	Macmillan Coffee Morning 10-12noon
Saturday 4th October	MAF Coffee Morning 10-12noon
Sunday 5th October	Harvest & Parade Service 10.30am
Thursday 15th October	Circuit Meeting at Barwell
Mon 19th—Fri 23rd Oct	School Half-Term
Wednesday 21st October	Hinckley Church Council
Sunday 25th October	Clocks go back one hour
Sunday 8th November	Remembrance Service 10.30am
Sunday 30th November	Circuit Advent Service at Hinckley 10.30am
Sunday 6th December	Whitechapel Gift & Parade Service 10.30am

Letter from our minister, Rev. Edward Sakwe

Dear Church Family and Friends,

I greet you all in the precious name of Jesus Christ the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.

Another 'Connexional Year' 2026/2027 is dawning, and I'm reminded of Frances Ridley Havergal's favourite New Year's Hymn "Another Year is Dawning" (The Methodist Hymn Book no. 954 – copyright Dec. 1933)

1. Another year is dawning:	2. Another year of mercies,
Dear Master, let it be,	Of faithfulness and grace,
In working or in waiting,	Another year of gladness
Another year for Thee:	In the shining of Thy face.
3. Another year of progress,	4. Another year of service
Another year of praise,	Of witness for Thy love:
Another year of proving	Another year of training
Thy presence all the days:	For holier work above.

Frances composed this particular hymn as a prayer for New Year's 1874. The Hymn emphasises Frances' devotional closeness to Christ and dedicated service to Him.

Whether or not you are familiar with this Hymn, I would encourage you to spend a few minutes contemplating and perhaps even singing it (It is set to the tune of another well-known hymn – "Stand up, stand up for Jesus").

Like Frances, we are summoned to reconsecrate ourselves to living for Jesus as a new Connexional Year unfolds. May the Lord help all of us to live lives that are deeply devoted to Him in this New Connexional Year. Every blessing and peace,

Revd Edward Sakwe

Report from Ladies Guild

Since the last report several members have been attending hospital commitments and having treatment regularly, Bev Bennet and Margaret Hood have been missing frequently from our meetings but are now back at our meetings for the time being. Sue Bland one of our members has stepped into the breach by leading and speaking of past times in Hinckley hosiery life.

We have been up to the Plough for tea and to play table skittles which was great fun. At Christmas we are going to the Greyhound for a Christmas meal before the Christmas holidays. It makes it easier having the same landlady in the two pubs and Diane arranges that for us.

Chrissy organised a trip to Stratford – upon - Avon in August which everyone enjoyed but nearly died of heat exhaustion!! Our thanks go to her for organising that. We've also had speakers and played domino's and done quizzes.

In the next few weeks we will be doing Christmas decorations run by Carole Malin another of our members and hopefully doing the windows in church for Christmas.

We have had some good coffee mornings when our two honorary male members help out, John who will take over the kitchen for us and Glenda's husband Martin who runs our cake stall. John is leaving us soon and we will really miss him.

We sent Rev Neil (Joe) Adams a cheque to help with his health expenses and have had a lovely thank you card remembering the happy times he spent here as our minister. We have several members from church or guild who now live in Granville Gardens, several members go to see them frequently so they know they are not forgotten.

Jenny Lucas

Harvest linked Coffee Morning Saturday 3rd October

Our coffee morning on Saturday 3 October, from 10 am to noon, will raise funds for the Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF), the world's largest humanitarian air operator. MAF delivers supplies to remote communities that others cannot reach. It is currently supporting millions of people in Sudan who lack food, water and medical care amid the world's largest humanitarian crisis. Rising fuel costs resulting from the war with Iran have increased the cost of these vital flights, so every donation will help.



Harvest Thanksgiving Sunday 4th October

This year our harvest thanksgiving service will be at 10.30am on Sunday 4th October. As is our tradition it will be a parade service to which our uniformed groups will be invited. Despite the many challenges we face in the UK we do not suffer the life-threatening hunger that others face in other countries. So, we do have many good things lots to be thankful for and praise God.

We wish to use this occasion to raise some awareness and funds for the work of the Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF). In many areas of the world getting water, food and medical help is very difficult because of the lack of roads. Planes can often be used to solve the problem but of course costs are involved. So, this year our monetary offering will be sent to MAF to help keep the life-giving planes in the air.

Any donations of produce will still be gratefully received and distributed to Lawrence House, and any tins and food will be donated to the Hinckley Area Foodbank.

Parts of our worship might be memorable – we're still discussing whether we can fit a plane into the worship area!! Certainly, for any youngsters interested in planes and aviation there could be some fascinating facts and stories.



Bringing hope to the isolated – Mission Aviation Fellowship



Interested in Model Railways? Got some trains stashed up in the attic?

We are a local area group of the G scale Society, and we meet most Tuesdays 12:00-16:00 ish at the Hickley Methodist Church.

We don't just have G gauge; we also have built an OO layout which is operational but is currently having scenics added.

Some group members also dabble in other gauges, T, N, OO9, even full-size steam.

Please feel free to drop in and see what the group can offer you. Generally, there are half a dozen of us, ostensibly working on layouts or rolling stock, but sometimes, we just have to 'test run' some trains. Along with tea and biscuits!

Eddie Spencer or Richard can tell you more

Proposed Merger of Hinckley and Leicester West Methodist Circuits

Discussions have been taking place about merging the two circuits. The purpose of such a merger would be to strengthen the leadership and governance as we seek to continue our ministry and service. Our mission would continue 'to seek and save the lost' but we believe that would be better done together. Though the new circuit would be larger, the tasks of ministry can only take place in local communities, as they always have, the circuit is the entity that facilitates and supports the work. It is the mission of each church that makes the difference.

Bringing together the circuit staff would facilitate four presbyter ministers, a mission enabler, two Children and Families workers, five Local Lay Pastors with the administrators, and provide a strong team with a range of gifts and graces to support the churches in their mission. In a world where our current model of church is deemed increasingly irrelevant to our secular society, we would like the story of our coming together to be seen as an opportunity for change, to reverse this trend, rather than a pragmatic approach to falling membership.

At the moment the Leicester West Circuit has a membership of 375 and can no longer justify having three ministers, it is inevitable that this will reduce to two. The Hinckley Circuit reduced to two in 2023; its current membership is 350. The availability of ministers through stationing is likely to reduce significantly over the next five years and while both circuits could continue separately for a while, there is a possibility that when a minister leaves they may not be replaced.

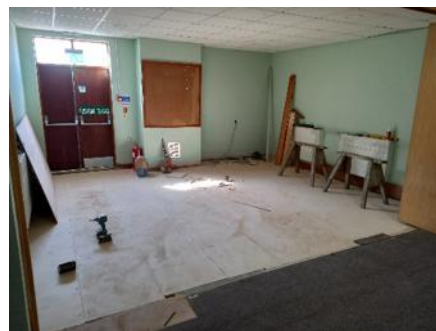
Since the current superintendent of the Hinckley Circuit is also interim super for the Leicester West Circuit and the situation in Leicester West does not look as though it is going to change, there is a degree of urgency to provide some stability for the Leicester circuit. In addition, as the Hinckley circuit is on the edge of the district, bordered by both the Birmingham and Notts' and Derby districts, any merger will need to look east towards Leicester. Merger now with the Leicester West Circuit will also give the Hinckley circuit stability and confidence in the future.

It is proposed that after consultation over the summer of 2026 the two circuit meetings decide at their autumn meetings whether to merge or not. Should the decision be made for merger, this would go to the spring Synod in 2027 and then to Conference in June. The two leadership teams would work together in 2026/27 with a view to forming the new circuit for start of the Connexional year 2027/28.

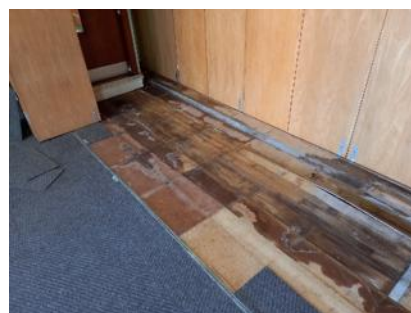
Further details are included in the discussion document which is on the church notice board. A copy can be emailed to people by Richard Smith, Senior Steward – rcs1815@gmail.com. Please ask any questions to one of the church or circuit stewards: Arthur Bennett, Rachel Cobb, Sue Cooper, Charles Davies, Cynthia Jordan, Richard Smith.

Lower Schoolroom Floor Repairs

Over the summer some repairs were made to the floor in the extension area of the Lower Schoolroom. Some of the cost was paid for by a grant from the Circuit, so grateful thanks for their support. The photos give some idea of the problem and the work done.



Sadly, further problems were caused by the heavy rain at the end of August after the months of dry weather. Some flooding got into the building and lifted another section of the floor. As this September edition of our newsletter goes to print we are awaiting an assessment to identify what repair will be needed.



The latest 'flood' damage.

Richard Smith

More discussion about Circuit Mergers and our future

An illustration which is nothing to do with the church. The other week someone asked me if I could do one of my history talks in a couple of years' time. I would of course be delighted, and I have 'booked' the date. However, I felt obliged to say that I could not guarantee I will be here then!!!

Church, Circuits, and the Future As part of the discussion about the circuit merger proposal I have been sent a Church Vitality Survey.

As circuits merge to be more efficient, churches too will need to consider how they can most effectively fulfil their calling to make new disciples. If there is a need to prioritise buildings and survival, over service and discipling, then churches need to carefully consider the future. Could merging with another church liberate us to focus on what is at the heart of our faith?

It is important that each church realistically thinks about what they might expect over the next five years. A survey form will be produced to help churches seriously reflect on membership, buildings, finance, leadership and whether closing the church and merging with another might helpfully bring relief from current pressures and stresses, to focus more on mission and growth.

How do we identify churches that are vulnerable?

We need to pause and reflect realistically on the current situation in each church. The following should help to identify how healthy a church is, though if we are honest with ourselves, we should be aware of our current situation.

- What is the cost of upkeep for the property?
- Are there any outstanding issues with the building?
- Is there sufficient income to meet all out goings?
- Are you concerned about the number of members?
- Are there just a few people holding all the offices?
- Has the mission and ministry come to a completion?

So, these are challenging things for us at Hinckley Methodist Church to think about and discuss. We probably need to arrange some formal meetings to discuss these matters as well as chat about them informally. We all know change is quite scary, but we also need to discern where God may be guiding us in the future. That might not necessarily involve a change of location but some new directions as to what we do in and from the building. Anyway, let's chat about it all!