

Wiltshire United Area (Methodist/United Reformed)

www.wiltsunitedchurches.org.uk

United Reformed Minister for
Trowbridge Sector
Wesley Road Church
& villages

Pastorate Profile for 2011

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WILTSHIRE UNITED (Methodist/United Reformed) AREA

THE AREA

The Wiltshire United Area was formed in 2009 from two United Areas, originally conceived and born in 1982. Since then we have worked hard to learn and grow together, as our particular denominational backgrounds have become less important over time. We have our own unique constitution, used by United Areas elsewhere as a model but are waiting for Churches Together in England to finalise a new model constitution for all the united areas that will be acceptable to Charity Commissioners as and when Areas need to register with them. Our development and growth has been guided by an Oversight Group on which the URC Synod Moderator and Methodist District Chairman and other Synod, District and Ecumenical representatives serve.

We remain firmly committed to the concepts of a United Area and to the wider Ecumenical implications that stem from this commitment. Our mission statement is set out in the Area Constitution:

- To fulfil together the life and mission of Christ's Church.
- To be a partnership in ecumenical development in ministry and the ordering and organising a group of Churches.
- To ensure that the ethos and evolving traditions of both denominations are allowed full play in the life of the Area.
- To share as far as possible the resources of the two traditions of the Area.

SECTOR STAFFING

We are recognised as an area of ecumenical co-operation within the URC South Western Synod and a Circuit within the Bristol Methodist District. The stipendiary ministers are recognised as ministers of both denominations, although they continue to be employed on the terms and under discipline of their own parent denomination. They are full members of both URC and Methodist Synods. It is recognised that ministers will give priority to attending the Synods of their own parent denomination.

The Wiltshire Area has 4 sectors, each with its own minister(s).

The sectors are based on town churches and cover surrounding villages:

(a) Calne (Revd. Roy Fowler, URC) / Devizes (Revd. Chris Cory, Methodist)

(b) Melksham/Corsham (Revd. Alison Morley, Methodist and
Revd. Hazel Allen, URC non-stipendiary)

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(c) Westbury & Warminster (Revd. Norman Price, Methodist),

(d) Trowbridge, for two appointments,

(i) Wesley Road, Trowbridge and (ii) Trowbridge United Church

Further details to be found in Appendix or on website www.wiltsunitedchurches.org.uk
FOR THESE APPOINTMENTS

The Trowbridge Sector comprises - two town churches:-

(i) For the appointment of a United Reformed Minister

Wesley Road (Methodist) Church,

- with Bradford-on-Avon United Church ,

- with Winsley Methodist Church

- and also Semington St. George's which only requires oversight, as people are under the care of the Anglican parish. The Methodist members are considered to be a class of Wesley Road and are offered an Ecumenical Welcome by the Anglicans.

(ii) For the appointment of a Methodist Minister

Trowbridge United (Methodist/United Reformed) Church

- with Holt (URC) Church

- with Hilperton

The Area has 21 churches in all, with a current joint membership of 838 according to the latest denominational returns.

The ministry is essentially a team ministry, operating in many regards like a Methodist circuit with a preaching plan and ministers preaching as far as practical, in relation to local commitments, throughout the Area. They are supported by supernumerary ministers and a team of local preachers. The majority of churches have morning services, but some village churches meet either in the afternoon or evening. Some churches have occasional evening services as well as morning and Bradford has a regular evening service at present. In many places there are close working relationships and regular united services or exchange of pulpits with Anglican friends, often in place of traditional evening services and maybe employing alternative forms of worship.

We have a rotating Area Chairmanship which lasts for three years and the minister acts as the lead minister in the Area for that period. We also have a Methodist minister who has the legal responsibilities of a Methodist Superintendent that cannot be exercised by a minister of another denomination. When the Chairman is a Methodist Minister, the two roles may be brought together. However when the Chairman is a U.R.C. minister, an experienced Methodist minister then takes on the tasks set out in the attached Superintendent's Job Description. The Revd. Roy Fowler (U.R.C.) is the Chairman until September 2011. The Area is looking for a Methodist minister to take on the role of Area Chair with immediate effect from September 2011, thus maintaining the alternating denominations in this role.

The ministerial team meet regularly together and also as part of the Area Executive which comprises the Area ministers, non-stipendiary ministers and Area Officers. The Area Executive generally meets for a whole day three times a year to do strategic planning. The Area Leadership team comprises Ministers and Lay Officers who deal with routine matters and provides a strong and experienced administrative and support framework for the Area. They report, as necessary, to the Area Meeting which normally meets once a quarter. Various committees meet at an Area level with meetings generally held at Churches throughout the Area.

FINANCE

All ministers, regardless of their denomination, serve the United Area and are supported financially by the Area. Stipends and other allowances are paid according to the normal employment terms and prevailing approved rates of their parent denomination

All but one of the present manses are Methodist owned properties. All are modern properties, partially furnished, and routinely inspected and maintained, in accordance with Methodist practice, regardless of the denomination of the resident minister.

All churches within the Area are responsible for their own funds, and buildings, where appropriate. Churches are expected to pay assessments to the Area, as agreed by the Area Meeting, to a formula based broadly on membership numbers. Assessments fund nearly all the cost of local ministry and assessments from our parent bodies. We are grateful that all the Churches manage regularly to meet their assessments without need for prompting.

The new United Area inherited a sound financial base from the two former United Areas in Mid Wilts and West Wilts, including what is now a substantial Circuit Advance/ Model Trust Fund, recently augmented by the sale of two former chapels. These monies are regularly made available to support, in part, qualifying projects in Methodist or United Churches. URC churches (and also United Churches) are able to seek financial support from the Provincial Synod.

ECUMENICAL ASPECT

We believe that this appointment to the Wiltshire (Methodist/URC) United Area is of considerable ecumenical significance. We are an organised group of churches who have their own constitution, their own executive, their own preaching plan and Area Meeting (that also functions as the Methodist Circuit Meeting). There are 3 types of members; Methodist, United Reformed and joint members, therefore all decisions have to consider

both denominations without over-emphasising one or the other. An understanding of the sensitivities of some people about the denominations is essential alongside the ability to maintain a strong sense of being a United Area. The right minister in this ecumenical appointment will not only maintain all the work which has been done over many years that has brought the Area to the position where it works quite effectively and efficiently but also enable people to have a vision for the future.

In the light of the Methodist/Anglican conversations, the whole issue of the URC/Methodist relationship is a very sensitive area and needs careful and sympathetic handling. The increasing number of Methodist/United Reformed United Areas nationally emphasises the importance of these ecumenical partnerships to both denominations. The chairman is recognised as the lead minister with the Area by both denominations and is able to represent the United Area to both the United Reformed Church and the Methodist Church Synods and attends the United Area's Oversight Group.

THE FUTURE

The Area Meeting recently agreed that all churches in the Area would be required to undergo at some time in the next five years a 'Healthy Church Check' facilitated by the United Reformed Synod to review their life and mission - this programme encourages the church to set goals for their development.

The two former areas were joined with the specific purpose of strengthening the mission of the churches. Inevitably during the first year, much of the energy of the Area leadership has been taken with getting the new Area up and running. As the new structures become more robust, we intend to spend more time on reflecting on how we can encourage mission. The Area Executive meets three times a year for a whole day to develop aspects of our Area vision. Incoming ministers would be expected to play a part in this process.

While we have been reassured that up to August 2014 both denominations are committed to maintain a full-time stipendiary deployment of six ministers, we realise that with the decreasing number of ministers available in both denominations, the further future is less certain. The Area has begun a process to train the present lay-leadership and lay-ministry in the churches and looking at how that lay leadership and ministry can be developed.

The Area is looking at how we deploy our ministers within the Area. Pairing the two ministers in the Trowbridge sector with a view to their working together and supporting each other is a model we would like to extend to the whole Area. This will make rotating ministries between the two denominations easier into the future as well offering a more varied ministry to the churches. The Area is also looking at how ministers with specific

skills might make these available to the whole Area. However we realise that there is a need to keep expectations of each individual within reasonable bounds.

We feel these are exciting and very positive times for us here in Wiltshire and are looking forward to the future. We are also looking forward to welcoming ministers with vision and enthusiasm to be part of what we believe God is calling us to do here in this lovely part of Wiltshire.

For further information visit the web site at: www.wiltshireunitedchurches.org

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MINISTERIAL PROFILE

WESLEY ROAD METHODIST CHURCH

Newtown, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 0AX

www.methodist-church-trowbridge.co.uk



Location:

Situated close to Trowbridge town centre (County town of Wiltshire), and to the Railway station. The Church was opened in 1872 and in a residential area.

Membership:

Members 76, Adherents 20

(An ageing, involved and supporting congregation).

Average worshipping congregation:- 70+

Mission Statement:

"We aim to be a loving Christian family, welcoming all, seeking, serving, and sharing God's Will in all we do by the power of His love."

Mission Strategy "Annual priorities" whose implementation is overseen by the oversight groups - taking into consideration 'Our Calling' - (i)Evangelism Oversight Group (ii) Learning & Caring Oversight Group (iii) Service Oversight Group and (iv)Worship Oversight Group.

Local Church Lay Leader currently in place.

Worship Leaders: We have six Worship Leaders.

Our Services offer a rich variety of worship including both 'old' and 'new' - Methodist and Anglican. Services are Sunday mornings with monthly Sunday Evening Worship / Healing Service.

All Age worship is monthly.

Also there is a Thursday morning communion.

Ecumenical and Community links (both as a Church and individually)

The Church is a member of CATA (Christian Action for the Trowbridge Area), Newtown Partnership of Churches.

N.A.R.A. (Newtown Area Residents Association).

Monday/Wednesday Club (Social Services Group) hiring the Church premises - support is offered by the Church.

Soup Run

Car Boot Sales Mission

House-to-house visiting

'Open the Book' Morning Assemblies in Schools

Support for "Venue"; open youth work in Trowbridge

Relationship with Holy Trinity Anglican Church - Some Services have been shared with our Anglican friends from Holy Trinity over many years and since April 2010 the two congregations have been worshipping together at Wesley Road but with no formal agreement.



Signing the Declaration of Intent between Wesley Road Methodist and Holy Trinity Anglican churches



Sharing Food & Fellowship at the "Church Away" Week-end

Strengths:

- Regular, small and committed Sunday Club
- Successful Youth Club.
- Brigades (girls and boys) currently only teenagers, numbers increased over the last year.
- Successful Guide Company, well supported.
- Pastoral care and Pastoral Circles are in place.
- A caring and compassionate congregation supporting those less fortunate locally and in our world.
- We have a vision to move forward and enhance the Church premises.
- There is a committed, worshipping congregation willing to be interactive in worship.
- Communion - open with an inclusive tradition.

- We are good at welcoming people.
- We support personal development/training, spiritually and financially.
- The number of activities available - see *General Church Meeting Reports* booklet or PDF file)
- There is a "Help Others (charity fund raising) Group"
- Multi-media, music, video, pictures etc. are available for use.
- The Church is in a stable financial position, enabling it to employ a Family Worker (not in post at present), as well as paying assessment etc.

Weaknesses:

- Insufficient staff support for the Brigades
- Can be polarised friendships.
- Church is not adventurous enough in weekday prayer groups and Bible study groups.
- Perhaps not using other Worship leaders from a wider background to take Services.
- Lacking in spiritual growth - we need to get better about sharing our spiritual experiences with each other and those outside the Church.
- More technology training required to enable more people to participate / help.
- There are few young families.

Aims and Priorities:

- Follow our *Mission Statement*.
- Build up and improve the spiritual life of our Church.
- Continue with a visionary Development Plan.
- Build on our existing ecumenical links.
- To encourage younger people / young families to join our Church.
- Develop house groups and further alpha courses for different ages.
- Encourage and help to ensure the success of the youth alpha course.
- Continue with our vision for property development.
- Affirm the older person but enable the congregation to engage with the local population including younger families.
- Continue the development of good musical worship in services.
- Keep working on developing worship for the housebound.



Members of Wesley Road
with others at Iona



Curtains for the Eye Clinic in Ethiopia.
Part of Area Project, 2007/08

We would like a Minister who will respect the Methodist ethos of our congregation, is young at heart, able to connect with young families and must be ecumenically minded. The minister should be someone who can dynamically inspire the congregation to develop their own relationship with God, to develop their God-given gifts and who will enable us to fulfil our Mission Statement.

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Semington Methodists have a local, formal Sharing Agreement with the Anglican church. A ministerial team arrangement exists between the Anglican vicar and the appointee at Wesley Road.

Times of services:- 9.15 am and 6.00 pm

Methodist service on second Sundays of January (Covenant), March, May, July, September, and November (Remembrance).

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WINSLEY METHODIST CHURCH

THE PROPERTY

The Chapel is a Grade II listed building built in 1904 to replace an earlier building dating from 1808 and included in the listings as an unaltered example of c1900 chapel design. It is situated in the old part of Winsley village on the B3108, 3 miles from Bradford-on-Avon and 8 miles from Bath.



The building consists of the Chapel, schoolroom, modern kitchen and disabled toilet.

The schoolroom is used on a weekly basis by three independent choirs, an exercise class and monthly by the local Women's Institute as well as normal Church use including Church meetings and coffee mornings etc.

MEMBERS, SERVICES and MEETINGS

We have 16 Church members, average age above 65 and an average service attendance of 15. There are two yearly General Meetings chaired by a Minister, the finance, property and schedules meeting in October and the election of officers meeting in April. In addition, there are occasional meetings (three or four a year) which in the past have been attended by our Minister, the Parish Priest and representatives from both village churches to discuss co-operation and joint services.

Sunday services are:- 1st Sunday of each month Holy Communion service at 6pm
2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th Sunday services at 10.30am

These follow the usual service pattern although the congregation are open to variations and changes. There are seldom children in the congregation. It has become usual to join with the Parish Church and local scout group for the annual Remembrance service in November.

Our hymn books are Hymns and Psalms and complete Mission Praise. We have recently purchased a digital hymnal for use when our organist is unavailable.

MINISTERIAL INPUT

We fully appreciate that a minister's time is limited and ever more in demand. The following is a list of areas covered by our previous ministers which we hope could continue:-

- Conduct two Sunday services per month, that is the Sunday evening service with Holy Communion and the 3rd Sunday morning service which is followed by coffee in the schoolroom and a chance to meet the congregation.
- Chair the Spring and Autumn Church meetings.
- Lead a monthly Bible Study or similar activity.
- Visit to our monthly Saturday coffee morning occasionally and take the opportunity to meet the members and friends informally.
- Co-ordinate and work with our team of pastoral visitors
- Liase and work with the local Vicar and Parish Church Council on shared services and projects.

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UNITED CHURCH - BRADFORD ON AVON

MISSION STATEMENT

We seek to be :

- a fellowship where the presence of Christ is expected as both a challenge and affirmation and known especially in the breaking of bread and the sharing of the Word
- vital in worship which affirms the presence of Jesus, who makes God known and which bears the marks of His way of self-giving. In such worship God's people are recreated and enriched in the gifts of the Spirit
- active in mission, seeking to make God in Christ present to the world, being marked by a willingness to give life for others and thereby opening the way for those who respond to be enriched by grace.
- fostering the hope and reality of God's rule in the life of society by personal and corporate commitment to prayer, worship, evangelism and service.
- acknowledging our fellowship and work with other Churches in Bradford on Avon, the Wiltshire United Area and the wider communion of the world Church.

The Church

The Church is located close to the centre of town of Bradford on Avon. The Church buildings date from 1740 but the church interior has been modernised, within the last two years with comfortable seating, power point facility etc. Seating capacity is 95 downstairs and rather less in the balcony. The Church has United Reformed Church and Methodist Church "parents".

There is limited parking nearby, but the station car park is only a few minutes walk away.



The Services

We have a membership of 63 plus 34 adherents with 14 children in the Sunday School, all below the age of 10. Attendance at the morning service averages 55 adults and 10 children. There are also approximately 8 adults at the evening service. Worship style varies with the visiting preacher but Holy Communion, held once a month in the morning and evening, alternates between Methodist and URC format. Hymn books used are Hymns and Psalms, Mission Praise and Songs of Fellowship.

The Organisation

The Church Council consists of 10 members plus the Minister.

Pastoral visitors - 21; Healing team - 5 supported by a prayer group of 28; Housegroups - 2 with nine members in each; Choir - 15 members (although this more than doubled when we put on the musical "Rock" May 2010 .) Prayer groups - 3; Local/Lay preachers - 2
We keep ourselves informed through the weekly notice sheets and the monthly newsletter. There is a prayer chain.

Church Activities and Ecumenical Links

The Church supports Bradford on Avon Churches together, participating in ecumenical Lent groups; "Follow the Cross" on Good Friday; Pentecost Prayer Vigil; food parcels for the deprived and have recently taken part in an ecumenical "Prayer School". "Faithworks" debt counselling takes place in the Church foyer and we host the ecumenical prayer group. Monthly we host a Men's Social Group with 20+ members and Zion Baptist ladies join with our "Ladies Bright Hour" who meet fortnightly.

We support the Tiente Rinaldi Methodist Church in Uruguay by visiting them, supplying some materials for their Sunday School and are currently committed to sending them £1,000 a year to keep their clinic open.

A coffee morning is held on the first Saturday in each month. We take gift boxes to our housebound or elderly members at Harvest Festival and Christmas and fill shoe boxes for sending abroad through Samaritans Purse.

The following organisations hire our schoolrooms:-

"Footprints" (Baptist Church children's group)

Brownies

Pilates

Con Brio choir

Painting class

Bradford-on-Avon Town Choir

Wiltshire Dancing

Jane Austen Dancers

Badminton Club

Ballet

Weaknesses and strengths

Our weaknesses are:-

- The Church is not very visible from the road.
- The congregation has an age gap between 30 and 65. The young ones are too new or too busy to take responsible positions in the Church and the older ones are getting past it!

Our strengths are:-

- Friendliness to strangers.
- The love shared amongst us
- Strong pastoral support.
- Our buildings are close to the centre of the town.

Our Mission Statement

Our mission statement is of a general nature. We have just completed a year of self-examination which has prompted us to encourage more prayer activity amongst our members. As a form of outreach we have installed a Church website:

www.bradfordonavon-unitedchurch.co.uk

We are planning to get to know better the other Churches in the town (four pastors are in the process of changing!) so that we can perhaps work with them on joint projects. In 2011 we are planning to train for evangelism and the Sunday School staff are writing a paper on their future strategy.

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FARLEIGH ROAD MANSE

The manse is approximately 30 years old.

The ground floor has a hall; lounge(5.8x3.4); dining room (3.7x3.1) ; kitchen (3.7x2.4) and study (3.8x2.4); cloakroom

Upstairs: bedroom 1: 4.6x3.3; bedroom 2: 3.4x2.8; bedroom 3: 2.7x2.5 and bedroom 4: 3.4x2.4; bathroom

There is parking for 2 cars and a garage. Garden is a manageable size and has an outbuilding.