

The **Methodist** Church
Loughborough Circuit



Circuit Link

Winter/Spring 2024



Dear Friends,

I would like to introduce you to our new circuit magazine. This edition is a pilot to see if it is something our circuit community would like to receive and commit to writing articles for. It is hoped we can have a magazine twice a year. As a circuit, it is interesting to know what others within our various churches are doing, to share ideas and to give each other support and encouragement.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition. Please do let our staff team know if you would like to continue receiving a circuit magazine, and what you would like included.

Happy Reading,

Reverend Karen Beecham

Pastoral Letter

When we look beyond the manger, to the cross of Calvary, we will know the reason Christmas brings such joy to you and me'

This Christmas season my family and I offer our greetings to all our friends in the Loughborough Circuit and of course to the wider community around. We send these greetings to you all, with our love and with heartfelt best wishes for this special Christian season and the New Year.

Our prayer is that as you celebrate the Christmas story of 'Emmanuel, God with us', that He will bless you richly indeed.

As we all look forward into the New Year, we should all look forward too, to the opportunities in 2024 for our family of churches to grasp and to share with others.

I do pray that you have had a peaceful, happy, Christ centred Christmas, and we would like to thank you all, for our time together already shared, and look forward to the privilege of ministering alongside the circuit in the coming year.

There is a funny story about a young mother and a fidgety seven-year-old girl. They were both in church one Sunday morning. The child was extremely bored and the service was only half way through the sermon.

The young girl was causing her mother a great deal of stress. Finally, the girl looked up and exclaimed 'Mummy, if we just give him the money now, will

he let us go home?!!!!

We might smile, because we know in our hearts that the most painful honesty usually comes out of the mouths of children.

I hope that the young mother takes time to read the Christmas story to her bored child again.

For the Christmas story of Christ Jesus coming to earth is a story of great excitement and joy.

I pray that in the busyness of the season we do not become bored as well.

Christmas should instil within us all an attitude of joy, excitement and worship.

The story of Christmas reminds each of one of us that we have many wonderful opportunities each day to demonstrate the love of Christ to others.

The wonderful Gospel accounts of the story of the birth of Jesus helps us all to explore the mystery and the wonder of the God child.

The birth of Christ Jesus brings to the world a living hope. My prayer for us all is that in our very busy preparations for the season, we do not lose the central message. That is, Christ Jesus, Saviour and King, coming to each one of us in our need, and offering the love of God to a hurting world.

May God bless the people of our Circuit and those you love this special season of celebration

Every Blessing to you all,

Reverend Martin Swan

Loughborough Circuit Website

The Circuit has a website at www.loughboroughmethodist.co.uk

Each church has a page, and you can access the latest preaching plan.

If you spot anything that is out of date, please do let the webmasters know by contacting Peter Thorpe (peterthorpe52@gmail.com) or John Pipet (digital@loughboroughmethodist.co.uk).

Any churches that would like to be able to edit their own page can contact us to activate their account.

Circuit finances update

The Circuit finances are generally pretty stable, with the assessments from Churches covering the day-to-day expenses.

I am however aware that some Churches are finding it harder to meet their Circuit assessment. The Circuit tries to be flexible, making adjustments as needed, but it is only likely to get tougher as time goes on.

As many of you are aware, the Circuit owned a property called International House, on Leicester Road in Loughborough that had been left to it for the use of International Students. Over the years the need for this property had lessened and the difficulties of running the building had increased so the building was sold in 2021.

The Methodist Connexion took a chunk of the sale proceeds for their funds, a large amount has been given to international charities and some to the University Chaplaincy for use with international students. However, there is still a significant amount left which has been put in the Circuit Mission Funds and is being used to pay for employing lay workers in various Churches.

Rachel Thorpe

Circuit Treasurer

Barrow upon Soar

The last few years have been very exciting for us! We started our refurbishment in 2019 and things went well. The pews came out, the floor was levelled and a new foyer was built – the Welcome Coffee Bar and new kitchen emerged. With new paint colours and lighting, the Worship Area became a multi-functional accessible space both for the church and the community. The old, “old” entrance became a display window enabling us to advertise various events and our new heating system reduced our carbon footprint. New audio and visual display equipment and Wi-Fi were installed. Then came Covid and immediately after our first service we had to close.



Barrow Playgroup kept going in the rear of the premises but as a congregation we could no longer meet. However, we all kept in touch by phone, zoom and long newsletters with quizzes and other articles which gave us something to do. But as soon as we were allowed we were back with all our groups and able to again welcome our village friends.

Now in 2023, Barrow upon Soar village is growing rapidly and we have seen even more people using our new premises with regular bookings by two theatre groups, a karate club, gardening club and many one-off bookings for children's birthday parties, holiday clubs, dance practice sessions etc. Our church groups continue with bible study on alternate weeks and we attract friends to our monthly Minimarkets. Cuppa and Chatta, our afternoon group welcomes friends for tea and refreshments and the Saturday Crochet and Craft group continues to grow. Ladies Circle meet every two weeks and in 2024 will be celebrating their Diamond Anniversary – 60 years of fellowship, fun and raising money for charity. The Men's Supper Group meet for supper and activities and both groups attract both church members and village friends. Fun@Church has become our "Sunday School" with children meeting on Wednesday afternoon after school once a month. Even the Circuit Leadership Team seem to like our new premises and meet in the Welcome Coffee Bar every month. Church flowers are taken out weekly and given to friends who need to know that they are loved. Our new website and social media pages are kept up to date and attract comments and interest. We are also involved in regular activities with Barrow upon Soar Churches Together, a new event for 2023 being a Walking Nativity around the village.

We have held special events to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee where we had a life size figure of Her Majesty available for photographs, and a window display for the Coronation of King Charles III as well as the annual ones for Christmas, Easter and Remembrance Day. We yarn bomb the bollards outside and this attracts a lot of interest on social media and we have our very popular life size stable complete with Mary, Joseph, baby Jesus, shepherds and lots of sheep in the Foyer lit up daily during Advent.

We are looking to the future in faith that we can continue to show and share the love of Jesus with our friends in the community.

Find us on Facebook and at www.barrowuponsoarmethodistchurch.co.uk

Janet Thompson

Christchurch, Shepshed

Christchurch's focus for 2023 has been our community. The central locality in which Christchurch is nestled in the town of Shepshed doesn't mean we will automatically be central to the heart of the community. We have been delighted to see our weekly Friday coffee



mornings grow and grow in popularity, providing an opportunity to meet regularly with local people who are generally non-attendees of Church.

Our warm hub was originally created as a space for the community to come together and to stay warm despite the rising living costs. It proved to be so well received it continues into the warmer months, with the new name of Chat & Chomp, as again we invite all to join us for conversation, a cuppa and of course biscuits!

We have created a space within the church itself that can be used for quiet contemplation, bible study and reflection. This space is open to all during the community centred fellowship.

Successful fundraising events, including a harvest supper, an evening with Rev Martin Swan, soup lunch, craft stalls and latterly our Christmas miscellany, have provided us with opportunities to greet new faces and welcome in old friends.

As the 2023 chapter comes to a close, let us celebrate each new community connection made and each community connection sustained. Community is after all the heart of all our churches.

Victoria Merrill

on behalf of the Christchurch stewards

East Leake

East Leake Methodist Church sends its greetings to the other churches in the circuit.

We are one of the smaller churches in the Circuit, located in the centre of the village, close to the shops and adjacent to the Village Hall.



East Leake is the only circuit church not located in the Borough of Charnwood. We are in fact in the Borough of Rushcliffe, Nottinghamshire.

In recent times the village has rapidly expanded from 3,000-4,000 with population soon expected to be over 10,000 due to new and on-going housing developments.

Our worship area is flexible; with a visual and audio system and Wi-Fi enabling us to “zoom” our Sunday services and other church meetings. This has helped us to continue outreach to our church members who are unable to attend for various reasons, and, on occasions, those who do not live in the local area or are just away on holiday.

The congregation offers a community coffee morning each Saturday morning now badged as a “warm space”, so if you’re in the area please do pop in.

All our facilities are on the ground floor and easily accessible for disabled access. This has encouraged our local community care to run a “memory café”, involving coffee and cake, once a week.

A “church” Brownie group meets weekly, with a Ladies Fellowship group meeting fortnightly, as does a Bible study/social group called “Four Square”. Services are also held at a local residential care home in partnership with Churches Together.

In response to our church mission statement we offer facilities for community art, craft, and exercise groups, a second Brownie pack and East Leake community care group. The church benefits greatly by having an active part time Local Pastor. There are also strong ecumenical links between the Anglican, Baptist and Roman Catholic churches in the village.

Our website is <https://eastleakemethodists.org.uk>

Bryan Harrison

Knighthorpe, Loughborough

As disciples of Jesus Christ we are called to love our neighbour, regardless of their backgrounds cultures or faiths. Community engagement is an effective way of nurturing relationships and working in partnership with the local communities. At Knighthorpe Methodist Church, we officially kick-started our community engagement project in the past summer, having spent the first half of the year on fostering connections and partnership opportunities with local organisations and charities.



As part of our community engagement activities, we have formed a **Gardening Club** where new and experienced gardeners meet regularly to do gardening tasks for the Church. Initially this group was created to support the gardening work when the university student volunteers were on their summer break. It has become a steady group comprising members and friends of the Church and several residents from the local area. We hope to see a continual growth in its size and bonding.

We are honoured to partner with *Incredible Edible Loughborough (IEL)* to develop a **community garden** in the Church's front lawn. Any harvest will be shared with the local community. It is currently a work-in-progress thanks to the tremendous support and help from IEL and university student volunteers. As a prelude to this, in July, IEL gave a sharing session on growing healthy food at the Church, with a good turnout of residents from the local area (with many stepping foot on Church property for the first time). We look forward to seeing how the community garden may take shape in spring 2024.

With Christmas approaching, we ran a **Christmas wreath workshop** on the last Saturday of November. It was a sold-out event, with everyone taking home a beautiful DIY wreath and joyful experiences. On the second Sunday of Advent, we held a **Christmas Carols Afternoon** on the Church's front lawn.

Members and friends of the Church and local residents gathered around the fire pit and spent a cosy and joyful late afternoon together (with roasted marshmallows, mince pies and hot chocolate drinks under Christmas lights!). For both events, members and friends of the Church made valuable contribution. It is encouraging to see the growing engagement between the community, and the church.

Community engagement is about cultivating relationships and, similar to sowing seeds and growing a garden, takes time, nurturing and understanding. Our longer-term goal is that the Church spaces can fill the lack of a community hub in the area, where the local community can come and meet for our activities, and that we can serve them in response to their needs and thereby sow the seeds of the Gospel which can take root and come to life at God's will and timing. May God continue to bless our journey to connect with the community and spread hope, peace, joy and love to our neighbour.

For news and updates of our activities, follow our [Facebook Page](#).

Vanessa Li, Community Engagement Worker

kt-community.engagement@loughboroughmethodist.co.uk



Knightthorpe Coffee & Crafts

We now have a core group of approximately 14 ladies and meet on Wednesday morning from 10am to 12 noon. We are always happy to welcome new members. If help is needed there is usually someone there who can solve any problems. We have two ladies who are 90+ and one of these ladies has learnt to crochet and has produced a baby pram blanket, another one of our ladies has learnt to knit. Coffee, tea and biscuits are provided.

For Christmas our church was been decorated by the ladies, who produced the nativity on the front table the Christmas tree decorations and knitted and crocheted other items.

Carol Suter

Loughborough Chinese Methodist Church (LCMC)



Chinese Church 11th Anniversary 8 Jan 2023

The Chinese Christian community is the fastest-growing section of the Church in the UK, with a 29-per-cent growth in the Chinese Church in the past two years. 27 new congregations have been set up during this time to respond to the needs of people emigrating from Hong Kong (according to Bible Society research).

Due to the growing number, many researchers expect that immigrants may become the majority demographic in European, UK and US evangelicalism soon.

To prepare, the Loughborough Methodist Circuit and LCMC has hired me as their Chinese Church youth lay worker to support youth ministries.

As a lay worker, I understand that in today's internet culture, "truth" is being declared from everywhere, and the students are asking, "How do I know that's true?" The slightly foggy faith or cross-your-fingers faith will not fly with this generation. They want truth. They're hungry for truth. And as Christians, we are gifted with the "Spirit of Truth" (John 16:13) to be speaking the truth in love (Eph. 4:15, 25).

After 6 months in the role I also relate to the finding of Dr. Kara Powell, executive director of the Fuller Youth Institute: "The biggest hindrance to [students'] faith isn't doubt. It's silence." Study of Dr. Powell's research has shown that the church's silence on truth has been the main reason why high school graduates leave the Christian faith. Since I took up this job I have started a whole new topic of teaching truth in Sunday School. I plan to teach

my students how to argue for the existence of God. I am also giving myself the time and willingness to walk with them through controversial issues such as drug taking, homosexuality, abortion, etc. Last but not least, I am starting to teach them the essential Christian doctrines such as the Trinity.

With support from Rev Calvin Cheung, I am working with the Chinese Overseas Christian Mission to conduct the Y'Fire Program among the Chinese Congregation of Methodists between Leicester, Loughborough and Derby. This program is to draw the new immigrants Chinese youth back to the church during weekends. This program got a good warm up on the 25th November 2023 when we had 25 students spending 2 hours in the church without touching their mobile phone! This Y'Fire Program will officially run from January 2024 till June 2024.

After the Y'Fire Program is completed in June 2024, LCMC plan to conduct a new program called God's Army Workshop This is a summer program that will include teaching the word of God time, playing time, training time, and Popcorn Movies time. We are also already starting the young children Bible Study Fellowship (BSF) through Zoom on Tuesday, Wednesday Thursday and Saturday evenings.

Wilhelmina Tan

Chinese Church Youth Lay Worker



A visit to the Wesley Chapel at City Road London August 2023

Mountsorrel

Our church can be found in Church Hill Road which is situated at the southern end of the village. Originally opened in 1970 and extended in 1978 we have a large suite of premises which are used by various groups seven days a week.

Our own midweek groups that meet regularly consist of a thriving Boys' Brigade Company and a "Ladies' Night".

A commercial Pre-school Playgroup meets five days per week; the Loughborough Seventh-day Adventist Church meets on Saturdays and we are also home to a School of Dance and Keep Fit classes.

Our regular worship times are on Sundays at 10:30am. On the 4th Sunday of each month, we usually meet instead at 4pm, with the service followed by a bring & share tea.

A year ago Eleri Bristow was appointed by the Loughborough Circuit to be our Lay Community Worker. At the moment Eleri is piloting a "Praying for the Streets" project.

Our membership is small but we always offer a Big Welcome to all— regulars and visitors alike.

Geoff Wainwright



Sileby

We have lately held a carol service and a Christingle service in our informal 'worship lounge' style. Both were well attended.

We have also held a successful craft fair and participated in the local Yard sale.

We hold coffee mornings on Thursdays weekly from 10-12noon and Coffee evenings 6-8pm on the first & third Mondays of the month.

We run an open mic night, 'Café live', on 4th Sundays from 7-9.30pm, with hot pasties and sausage rolls provided.

Last year we held a successful sweet and savoury pancake event on Shrove Tuesday, and may do so again this coming year.

Rob Newton, Lay Worker for Sileby



St Bartholomew's United Church, Quorn

Let me emphasise that word 'United' in our name, for that is what we are and have been now for 45 years. That means we are part of both the Diocese of Leicester and the Loughborough Methodist Circuit and we would normally have both a Vicar and a Minister. However, as you may be aware, we have been in an 'interregnum' (i.e. no Vicar) for the last two years, the Revd David



Bowler having retired in 2021 and not been replaced. During that time, however, we have been well supported by the Circuit Leadership Team and have consequently kept our strength as a worshipping community.

Currently we are in the midst of a Diocese-wide transition that will eventually group parishes into what will be known as 'Minster Communities', roughly a dozen neighbouring parish churches served by about four paid staff—something that will look rather like a Methodist circuit. No one quite knows how this will work out and the rest of the Anglican world is keen to see if the experiment is successful. In Quorn we are up to the challenge and ready to bring our strengths into whichever Minster Community we find ourselves. So, what are those strengths? Well, the interregnum has taught us to be fairly self-sufficient such that we now organise our own worship plan, inviting a wide range of ministers and worship leaders from both denominations to lead our services, including the Bishop on one occasion. We also have a fine medieval building, a high quality of music and, most valuably, a membership which is ready to step up to the plate and get things done.

Of course there are pockets of weakness, and things we have let slip. Our pastoral care system is in the process of being reviewed and we need to rebuild our work with children. Perhaps most important is our mission to grow in faith as individuals and as a fellowship. Through God's grace we know that will happen.

Mike Bird

Church Steward

Trinity, Loughborough

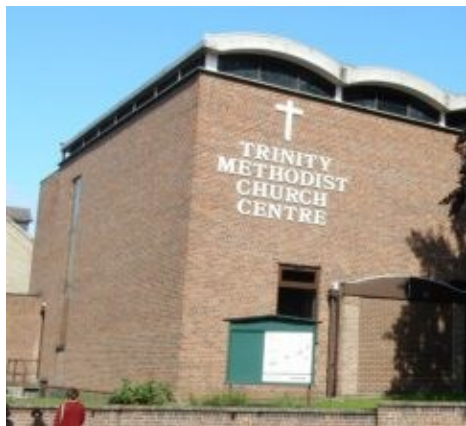
At Trinity we have recently been joined by James Blackhall, a student deacon, working part time with Karen. He led the first service in advent and is getting involved with pastoral visiting.

Jazz vespers has now come back after covid and hopefully we will have a service most quarters. Look out for it on the plan as quite a few people from around the circuit have joined us. It is normally a thoughtful service with good music, led by Chris Hill Jazz and including Caroline Sharp's beautiful voice - which you may well have experienced on 12th church in the days of lockdowns.

For our church festival on 16th June 2024, we are looking forward to welcoming David Owen back to Loughborough. David was chaplain to the grammar school for a number of years and also led services around the circuit before returning to full circuit ministry in Derby in 2019.

Trinity is part of a three churches partnership with the local URC and Baptist churches. We have various joint services across the year including a recent choir service with the choir made up of members from all the churches. In addition, there is a small peace and justice group that has been meeting for the last year or so. The last meeting involved listening to and questioning the Labour Party parliamentary candidate for the Loughborough seat.

With the Chinese church joining us at Trinity in late 2021, when they outgrew their previous venue, it is good to see so many people arriving as our services cross over each Sunday. A number of our members have helped by leading courses of English lessons for some of the members who had recently arrived from Hong Kong. We were grateful for some Chinese involvement in our latest property maintenance day. We have also enjoyed having united services which leads to a full church, with the service part in English and part in Cantonese with simultaneous translations of the sermon but other translations being via the screen. Each service has also been followed by a joint lunch where a couple of times we have had Chinese first courses and British deserts (playing to our strengths maybe.) Let's hope



these links can develop further over time.

A more recent change is that after over 40 years of faithful service, printing for churches and other voluntary organisations, Teamprint has finally called it a day. It was founded by the late Reverend Sidney Richardson. Over the years there have been many volunteers and the team have printed numerous magazines and even a few books including Sidney's autobiography. Unfortunately Covid led to their temporary closure and this gave a further impetus for groups to change their magazines to mainly digital versions, leading to a much reduced need for Teamprint. So, in the autumn the last group of 4 volunteers decided to call time. At Trinity we would like to offer many thanks to all those who have served in this unique group assisting churches and voluntary groups. However, this does mean Trinity has a newly available space and we will be thinking how best we can utilise this over the coming months.



This year our second advent candle remained unlit as the Christmas lights in Bethlehem remain unlit, in memory of those killed or injured in the current conflict in the Holy Land.

Finally, we would like to let you all know that on the 10th of February we will be having an evening of pizzas and dancing. There will be a buffet of pizzas followed by a bring and share desert and then afterwards AD200 will provide the music for a barn dance. If you would like to come, please book by signing the list at Trinity or contact Simon Scoggins on simon@scoggins.email

Andy Thorpe

VACANCY

The upper hall at Trinity is available for a regular booking on a Saturday – mornings, or evenings. If anyone knows of a group looking for a new home, please tell them to contact me on trinitybookings@loughboroughmethodist.co.uk

Rachel Thorpe

Twelfth Church

www.facebook.com/TwelfthChurch

The Facebook service started during the pandemic lockdown as a service going out on Trinity's Facebook page. It soon became apparent that people from both around the circuit and beyond were taking part in these services. A new identity was created to reflect this wider community. It's name comes from being the 12th church on our preaching plan. Each week, a service goes out around 10:45 on the 12th Church Facebook page. (A Facebook account is not needed to see the services, but Facebook will ask if you want to create one.)

Lockdowns were eased, but we saw that 12th Church services met the needs of individuals who couldn't attend a church service on Sundays for a variety of reasons. So with churches reopening their buildings, we continued 12th Church services.

But what might an on-line church look like?

The top priority has been to produce a worship service each week – different preachers leading in their own different ways. The majority of services are pre-recorded, but we “live-stream” some services, including from Trinity on the first Sunday of each month.

Our hymn video library now has over 260 different hymns. If there is not a recording of a hymn that a preacher wants, we endeavour to get a version recorded.

The 12th Church Facebook page also tries to reflect life in the circuit, be it adverts, special services (wedding, funeral/thanksgiving, farewell/welcome services etc)

For our next steps, we shall be putting out a questionnaire/poll to see what those who engage with 12th Church would like to see to help develop 12th Church into a fuller church community and to look at aspects of discipleship/prayer/reflections.

If you have any thoughts on the next steps for 12th Church, please send them to us either on the Facebook page (as a message), via e-mail digital@loughboroughmethodist.co.uk or to the Circuit office.

John Pipet

Woodhouse Eaves

Play and Praise

Our Parent Toddler Group meets at 9.15am every Thursday morning in term time. It is a thriving group for preschool children and run by Victoria and her helpers. For more information email v_corcoran@outlook.com or Facebook - [Play and Praise Woodhouse Eaves](#).



Prayer Meetings

2nd, 4th and 5th Fridays of the month at Church 8.30-9am. A focused time to start the day.

Taketime. A time to reflect and meditate on a bible passage.

At Church on **1st Friday** of the month and via Zoom **3rd Friday** of the month both at 10.30am. Everyone in the circuit is welcome to join in. Contact Anne Temple for more details.



2nd Sunday of the month at 4pm. An informal family time of crafts, fun, food and bible stories. Everyone welcome. For more details contact Gill Thompson gt300@btinternet.com

Christians in the Forest Bible Study

An ecumenical bible study run by the churches in Woodhouse, Woodhouse Eaves and Swithland. Weekly meetings looking at seasonal themes. Currently studying Advent 'A Strange Christmas' by Krish Kandiah. "What could be more familiar than Christmas? And yet... what could be stranger than God's plan for salvation?"

The January New Year Course will be 'The Prayers of Jesus - Hearing His Heartbeat' by Peter Hicks.

We are pleased that the church building is used extensively by the community. For room bookings contact Mark Temple.

Gill Thompson

Wymeswold

What has happened at Wymeswold in the last 12 months? Probably the thing you will all have heard about is that we were without heating during the winter months from the week before Christmas through to the summer. Undeterred we continued to worship in our “upper room” where we hope we continued to offer a warm welcome to visiting preachers and ministers. Having received a grant for a replacement boiler from the Circuit, we undertook the works over the summer and I am pleased to say we are now back in the worship space with heating.



What you may not have realised was that despite the heating issues it did not stop us from celebrating all the usual festivals, including offering Easter Breakfast for 30, and making up posies for Mothering Sunday for folk who do not come to the Service at St Mary's to pick up as they walked past the gates of Chapel.



Although we are small in number, we feel we are big with our ideas and try to engage with our community whenever we can. We have a good relationship with our Village School and help to coordinate an Ecumenical Group of Open the Book Storytellers who go into school each week to bring the bible stories alive to the Children. We also invite the school children and staff to Chapel twice a year for Experience Journeys. This year they came to celebrate Experience Easter and for the first time Experience Harvest. Next year we will offer Experience Pentecost and Experience Christmas.

With the works we undertook for the installation of the new boiler came some additional costs and plans for continued maintenance, which has necessitated a push on fundraising. We were very pleased to welcome Chris Hill Jazz in October and they helped to raise much needed funds to top up our finances. Everyone enjoyed the evening so much we hope to book them again in 2024.

We have for many years run a fortnightly pre-school group known as Mini-Fish. The first half of the year we had 3 or 4 children attending, 3 of whom started at school this Autumn, so this has meant that numbers have been low this term. We will continue to review this group and are looking at offering a Warm Chapel Welcome



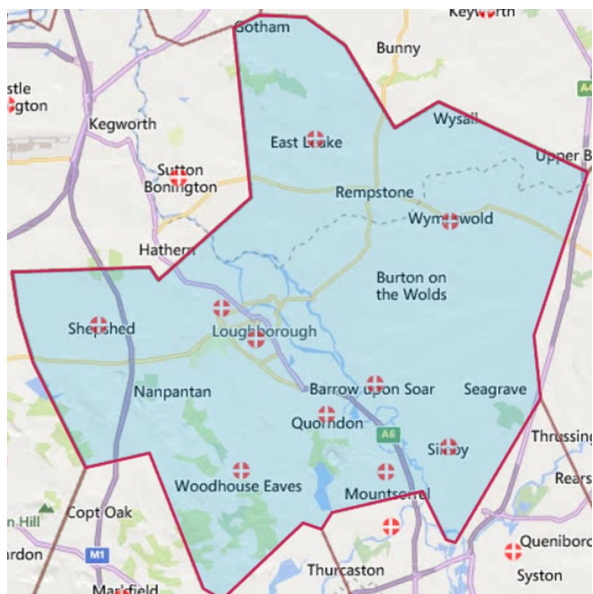
Chris Hill Jazz

to anyone feeling lonely, or in need of some socialisation. Primarily we hope to offer this to those who may be struggling at this time. We know some people are struggling as carers and there are those who are suffering with early stage dementia or illnesses such as Parkinsons. The doors will still be open to the pre-school children, their parents and grandparents as well and we hope to foster a multigenerational afternoon to socialise together. It's a new venture for us, so please do pray for us as we open our doors to whoever feels the need for companionship and conversation in the grey months after the glow of Christmas has faded.

Margaret Folwell



A map of the Loughborough Circuit



*Trinity Methodist Church
Loughborough presents...*



LIVE MUSIC

BARN DANCE

Saturday 10th February



Arrive at 6:15pm for pizza
(alternative food available)

Bring a dessert to share

Barn Dance will follow food

Please contact Simon to register your
attendance: simon@scoggins.email