

Rivercourt Methodist Church

Newsletter

June 2025

CELEBRATING 150 YEARS



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Message from the Editor

Hello Rivercourt family as we welcome in a new month and the start of Summer. We have lots of items in this month’s newsletter and I hope you have some time to look over these.

Our annual Summer day trip will be coming up soon in August (date to be confirmed). If you would like to put forward a place you would like to go, please let me know by Sunday 15th June. Using the places that are suggested, I will then ask the congregation for their preference, and the most votes will be our destination this year. Further details will then be available in July’s newsletter.

For any items for the July newsletter, please forward them to:
rivercourt.ministry@outlook.com by Sunday 29th June or let me know in person.

Regards,

Scott

2025 JUNE						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Dates for your diary

- Saturday 7th June- House of Prayer: 10.00am** Rivercourt with Rev Singa Vunipola
- Saturday 7th June Annual Circuit Day** at Fulham Broadway Methodist Church. 10.00am-2:30pm. All are welcome! Please come along.
- Sunday 8th June:** Bring and Share, **Second Sunday Lunch.** 12.30pm Rivercourt
- Saturday 14th June- Community Fete** - Shepherd’s Bush Road Methodist Church, 12:00-5.00pm. All are welcome.
- Sunday 15th June 12.45pm Meeting to discuss Church House,-** Sandwiches provided

CIRCUIT NEWS:

Changes in District Leadership: Appointment of Rev Faith Nyota as an interim District Chair for 2 Years

In accordance with Standing Order 423(6) of the Methodist Church, the London District Council has discerned that it needs a time to agree its way ahead following an unexpected change of leadership and so asked the Synod to designate a Chair to work alongside the London District Chair, Rev. Jonathan Dean for two years.

The Synod meeting on 10th May recommended to Conference that the Revd Faith Nyota is nominated as Chair of the London District from 01 September 2025 for a period of two years. Faith will continue in her appointment as the Superintendent of Chelsea, Hammersmith and Fulham Circuit and will continue to have pastoral responsibility for Chelsea and Fulham Broadway churches and will continue to live in the Circuit Manse at Albert Bridge Road. The district and the connexion will work with Faith and the circuit to find an appropriate minister to assist her in those circuit responsibilities.

The operational and financial details remain to be finalised between the District and the Circuit. Once completed, the Circuit will be informed about them.

ANNUAL CIRCUIT DAY:

Saturday 7th June 2025 Fulham Broadway Methodist Church 10.00 - 2.30

**Focussing on Discipleship and Evangelism from
a Methodist Way of Life perspective**

- 10.00-10.30 am Arrival & refreshments
- 10.30-12.00 Focus on Discipleship
- 12.00 - 12.45 Lunch (provided)
- 12.45 - 2.30pm Focus on Evangelism
- 2.30pm Close

THE CLOCK

The clock in the worship area has stopped! You may have noticed that the hands have been removed. The clock is 150 years old and has never needed any servicing or repairs.

Unfortunately, in the anniversary year of Rivercourt, the clock has stopped. A specialist clock repairer has looked at the clock and provided an estimate of £756.00

The church needs to decide whether:

- Should the clock be repaired?
- The church pays for the repairs?
- The church starts a fundraising campaign?
- • The clock is replaced with a more modern clock?

Let a steward know your thoughts.



A goodbye message from Marina

Hello Rivercourt! It's Marina here, your C&W Administrator at Rivercourt. As many of you now know, I will sadly be leaving my role at Rivercourt on the 6th June as I start a new role as Editorial and Admin Assistant with the Salvation Army IHQ. I wanted to say a huge thank you to everyone at Rivercourt who has made my entry into working life such a positive and enriching experience. The community spirit and warmth at Rivercourt reflects exactly why I was so keen to work in a church environment. It's been a blessing to learn so many skills and take these experiences into my new career. From assisting with the Valentine's Day and 150th Anniversary celebrations, to meeting such a wide range of friendly and interesting people, I have felt very valued and blessed at Rivercourt. I wish Rivercourt nothing but success and growth going forward, and will continue to spread the word about Rivercourt's amazing community and worship events. I hope to stay in touch! All the best, Marina x

VE DAY 1945

The day started off just like any other day, but as time passed the pace of life changed and as we say nowadays “it’s something in the air”. Then the news came that the war in Europe had come to an end. This was followed by screaming, shouting and singing from everyone coming out of their houses, all meeting up in the street. At first I was very bewildered by it all, I didn’t quite understand what it meant.

My Mother soon explained.

As the evening drew near, more people and soldiers joined in the party.

I was sent to bed an hour later than usual, which I thought was a bit unfair not to be able to stay up longer. The party went on all night.

When I got up the next morning, I found two soldiers sleeping in chairs in the front room. My mother explained that many soldiers stayed the night (or rather, early morning) in neighbours’ houses. That day and night will be always remembered by me.

Margaret

Footnote:

Later that year all schools in the London borough were issued a medal and letter to be given to each child by their headteacher. I still have my medal, but my letter has been mislaid.



VE Day 2025

This was celebrated by a commemorative service at Westminster Abbey attended by the King and Queen and other members of the Royal Family. Also attending were representatives from various countries of whom were involved in the war. May 8th fell on a Thursday, a day in which the church opens its doors for a lunchtime service.

We put screen up in the Worship Area so that the service could be viewed live. Members of the public also joined in the viewing and the two minute silence was respected by all.

Margaret.

Monday 5th May 2025: VE Day BBQ



On the 5th May, we kicked off the VE Day commemorations with an outdoor BBQ. Unfortunately, the weather was not fully on our side, but thanks to Victor and his helpers, a feast was provided.

The local MP Andy Slaughter joined us, who has attended other events at Rivercourt and we appreciated his presence again.

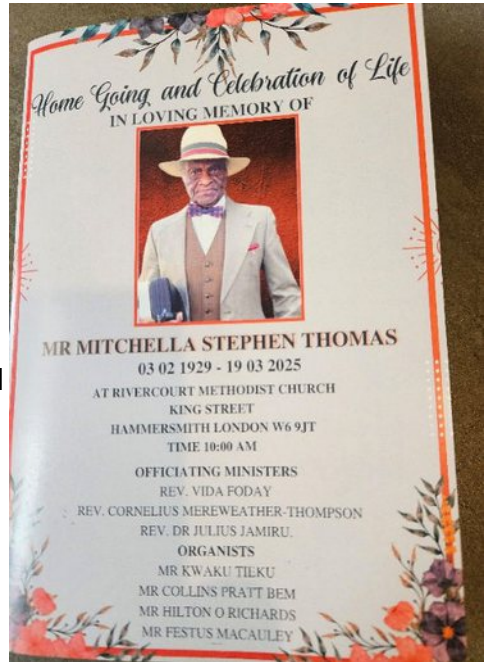
Before the BBQ, we had a service at 12:00pm led by our own minister Revd. Singa Vunipola. The Tongan and Fijigan communities also attended, who took part in the service with song and dance.

We held a two minute silence and concluded the service with the national anthem.

Mr Mitchella Thomas

Friday May 9th, Rivercourt said goodbye to Mr Thomas. Mr Thomas was a much loved member of Rivercourt, known by most people as Mr Thomas and known for his enthusiastic voice. When the congregation sang – often struggling to sing hymns, Mr Thomas could be heard! His voice led many of the congregation, for many a hymn.

His family and friends gave him a wonderful send off. The church was packed! Over a 100 people crowded into the worship and lounge areas. Some rousing hymns were sung including 'And Can it Be'- Kwaku played it with vigour and many people there remembered Mr Thomas singing that particular hymn with great energy.

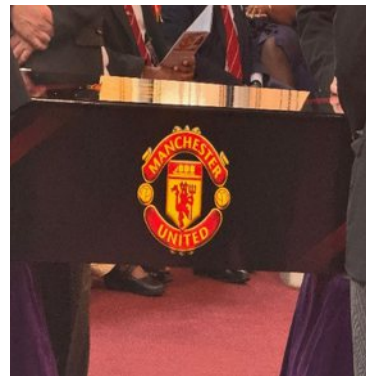


As is often the case, people learn more about an individual at their funeral than they knew when the person was alive. Mr Thomas was an ardent Manchester United football fan and mourners were asked to wear a splash of red at his service.



Mr Thomas's family, generously donated the collection taken at the funeral to Rivercourt.

Rest in Peace Mr Thomas, we will miss you



THE FUTURE OF RIVERCOURT HOUSE

For several months Rivercourt Church members have been considering the future ownership and management of Rivercourt House, the building next door at 229b King Street.

As part of that process discussions have taken place with the London Committee of the Methodist Church, the current owners of the building, in order to obtain answers to questions that have been raised by church members regarding the future of the building. Those answers have now been received from the London Committee and the Chair of the London District so we are in a position to make a final decision about which option of the 2 options available to us we wish to take.

A special church meeting will be held here on **Sunday 15th June** to discuss the matter and a final decision will be made at that meeting. This will be a very significant decision which will affect the long-term future of Rivercourt so it is most important that as many members as possible attend the meeting.

The meeting will start at 12.45pm after morning service and sandwiches will be provided. The future of Rivercourt House will be the only item discussed at the meeting so it is anticipated that an hour will be enough time for the discussion.

If you have any questions, please speak to Monty Grigg.

RIVERCOURT ANNIVERSARY
OPENING SERVICE – 18TH MAY 2025

Monty Grigg welcomed everyone to Rivercourt on the opening service for the 150 year church anniversary on Sunday May 18th 2025 and at the request of Rev Jongi (District Chair) gave a brief introduction to the background of this festival of thanksgiving that is planned to run until the end of September.

The story of Rivercourt started in the late 19th Century when a fund was established by a group of Wesleyan Methodists who lived in Hammersmith and by 1873 sufficient funds had been raised to buy this site. The stone laying ceremony was held on the 8th March 1875 and the church opened for worship on the 1st October 1875. By a strange coincidence, the 1st Minister stationed here was called the Rev. H Church! From buying the site to opening the finished building took less than 2 years. I rather doubt that today's construction industry could achieve that in 2025, even with all their modern equipment!

Worship has been offered to Almighty God continuously in this church, including during the two WW's; interrupted only by the redevelopment of the interior started in late 1996 and reopening in April 1997, and also by the Covid lockdown. To date, 34 Methodist ministers have served here. In common with the history of most Methodist Churches in the UK, Rivercourt has been witness to great highs in terms of the number of members; social groups and activities; with the periods under the leaderships of the Rev. Dunning from 1935- 1941 when Rivercourt House next door was built; and that of Rev. John Simmonds from 1987 – 2000, when the re-development was carried out. The display boards around the church contain fascinating and very detailed information about our story. Rivercourt has also had its downs, numbers etc;

For 150 years this building and its worshipping community has been a commanding physical presence in Hammersmith, witnessing to the continuous grace and love of God; while the church members have worked tirelessly to serve God through their activities and service to the local community. So, we are all invited to give thanks to God for the sacrifices made and the service given by our predecessors over the years but also, to look forward to everything and anything that God is calling us to do now, both with this building, with Rivercourt House and with our lives as we seek to continue to serve him.

150th Anniversary – Photographs and Memorabilia



A display of photographs and memorabilia are on display inside the church. Take time and have a look around, see if you can remember some of the events that have happened in the last 50 years or recognise any of the members.

It would be lovely to add to the display, if you have any memories, photographs or 'souvenirs' from Rivercourt please let me (Joan) know.

The London Tamil Christian Congregation have been worshipping at Rivercourt for 33 years and have agreed to produce a display board to add to the collection.



In addition a timeline of the history and a booklet giving details of Rivercourt have been produced for the 150th anniversary. The church has also bought some pens with a stylus for using with a touch screen and had them personalised to mark the occasion. Please take a booklet and a pen as a souvenir. All donations towards the production costs are welcomed.

What is noticeable is that with the introduction of digital cameras and smart phones, photographs after the year 2000 are rare. It would be lovely to produce a board of photographs from 2000 to the present day, if you have any and are willing to lend them, please let me know. I have some – please add to them so the last 25 years are displayed.

When the Church started thinking about the anniversary, a small group, Betty and Margaret, led by Christine started the planning. Christine undertook a lot of research both in the church with the archived records and outside with the various historical groups. Unfortunately, Christine's sister is seriously ill and Christine was unable to complete her plans.

The week before the opening service, 18th May 2025, many people gave their time to produce what is in the church today. Too many to mention by name and I'm afraid I will miss someone by name out. But, I would like to give special thanks to Christine for her initial research and planning, Fiona and Jon for the production of the booklet, Marina for her creativity producing the Timeline and the photo boards of previous ministers, James and Scott who accompanied me on several trips to IKEA to buy frames, help mount the photos, fix the frames to the walls – patiently move the frames a few times when I changed my mind! Church members who bought or made endless cups of coffee for me and brought photographs in for scanning.



Very few, if any, of us will be at Rivercourt for the 175th Anniversary let alone the 200th. To this end, I have started to build an archive. As part of the archive there is a hard back book for members and visitors to write their thoughts, memories and suggestions down. Please add to the book.

Plans to celebrate the anniversary include a 'Hymnathon' – where 150 favourite hymns are sung. If you haven't given your favourite hymns please sign up – the sheet is on the table with the memorabilia

When researching the history of Rivercourt, it was discovered that the Church opened on 1st October 1875. Celebrations will be held from May until the end of September/beginning of October 2025.





Rev Jongi (District Chair for the London District) led worship on Sunday 18th May. The service was followed by a fabulous food feast! Prepared, served and cleared away by Victor, Betty Francess, Margaret, Scott and many other volunteers.

Rev John Cooke led worship for our second service. Rev John Cooke was the Superintendent minister during the period of

Rev Jongi (the redevelopment and was instrumental in raising funds from the local community and supporting Rivercourt with his leadership.

Again, the service was followed by a food feast!



Kwaku and Pearce have volunteered to produce a concert and when our own Minister, Rev Singa Vunipola, is back from compassionate leave, details will be published. If you have any suggestions for celebrating the anniversary please speak to Rev Singa Vunipola.

If I've missed anybody out by name – apologies, forgetful brain! You are one of Rivercourt's Unsung Heroes!

Thank you for all the help and support and enjoy the celebrations! *Joan*

Thank you to:



Fiona for her diligent work as the gift aid secretary over the years. Fiona has claimed thousands of pounds from HMRC for Rivercourt over the years. Thank you!

Aina Goode for the beautiful flower display – displayed at Rivercourt's Anniversary service on 18th May . Thank you Aina!



Please pray for:

Francis as she recovers from her recent surgery and for a speedy recovery

Christine, who has been unable to attend church for some time now with her own health issues, and who is now supporting her sister

Marina as she finishes as our Administrator this month, and embarks on a new adventure with a new company

Revd Faith Nyota as she prepares to take up her new, additional responsibilities.

Rivercourt members as we make decisions about Church House and our future.

An Opportunity to join a pilgrimage to Wesley's Chapel

A pilgrimage to freely enter Wesley's Chapel with others to hear Revd. Canon Dr Julian Pursehouse, Chair of the Editorial International Board of the Holiness Journal affiliated with Wesley House Cambridge, talk on "What would John Wesley's message be today?"

Your host, the London Methodist Lunch Club, warmly invites you to the historic Wesley's Chapel and Leysian Mission:

Date: Friday 12 September 2025 Time: 1:00pm to 4:30pm

Address: Wesley's Chapel and Leysian Mission, 49 City Road, London EC1Y 1AU.

The Pilgrimage Programme: 1:00pm to 4:30pm

1:00pm – 1:30pm Reception and refreshments

1:30pm - 2:15pm Welcome, freewill donations collected, introduction of the speaker, Julian's talk, and question and answer.

2:15pm - 3:15pm

**Option A: Walkabout and talk led by
Carole Merriman**

**Option B: Visit to the House and talk
led by Peter Richardson (£10 per
person to be paid by the visitor)**

3:15pm Closing Act of Worship led by Revd Canon Dr Julian Pursehouse.
Refreshments and fellowship after worship

Julian is a Methodist minister serving in the Aire and Calder Circuit in the Yorkshire West District, where he has pastoral charge of three churches, with responsibility for developing a Creative Arts Project based at Newmillerdam. He is a qualified supervisor in the British Methodist Church.

The Pilgrimage to Wesley's Chapel is sponsored by the London Methodist Lunch Club. The Club meets regularly, for lunch and to hear an invited speaker on the second Friday of each month from October to May in the Lancaster Hall Hotel, 35 Craven Terrace, London, W2 3EL. Alcoholic and soft drinks are on sale by the hotel with your lunch. Tele: +447928016681.

Wesley's Chapel and Leysian Mission is considered the "Mother Church of World Methodism," incorporating the iconic Georgian Methodist Chapel, Museum of Methodism plus the home of Methodism's founder, John Wesley (28th June 1703 to 2nd March 1791). The tomb of John Wesley, a Grade: II Listed Building, is located in the burial ground of Wesley's Chapel.

To book your free seat, see this Eventbrite registration link:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/what-would-john-wesleys-message-be-today-tickets-1379903852569?utm-campaign=social&utm-content=attendeeshare&utm-medium=discovery&utm-term=listing&utm-source=cp&aff=ebdsshcopyurl>

<https://www.instagram.com/p/DKF8Se2o0gy/?igsh=MTR6cm04ZmFpN3Uwbw==>

LONDON METHODIST LUNCH CLUB



Monthly lunch with a **different speaker each month**. Freshly made three course meal, and good company.



Where?

The Lancaster Hall Hotel, 35 Craven Terrace, London W2 3EL (Nearby tube stations are within walking distance)

When? The second Friday of the month from Oct-May

What? Lunch served at 12:30pm, tea & coffee from 11:30am

CONTACT:

Mike Bibby
020 8399 8596

Carole Merriman
cdmerriman@btinternet.com

Preaching Plan

Sunday 1st June- Revd. Singa Vunipola: Holy Communion service
Steve's team

Thursday 5th June- Revd. Singa Vunipola

Sunday 8th June- Mr Feao Vunipola
Betty's team

Thursday 12th June- Mr Monty Grigg

Sunday 15th June- Mr Monty Grigg
Juliana's team

Thursday 19th June- Revd. Marilyn Neufville

Sunday 22nd June- Revd. Singa Vunipola
Steve's team

Thursday 26th June- Revd. Singa Vunipola

Sunday 29th June- Mrs Christianah Akinyele
Betty's team

Sunday 6th July- Revd. Singa Vunipola: Holy Communion service
Steve's team