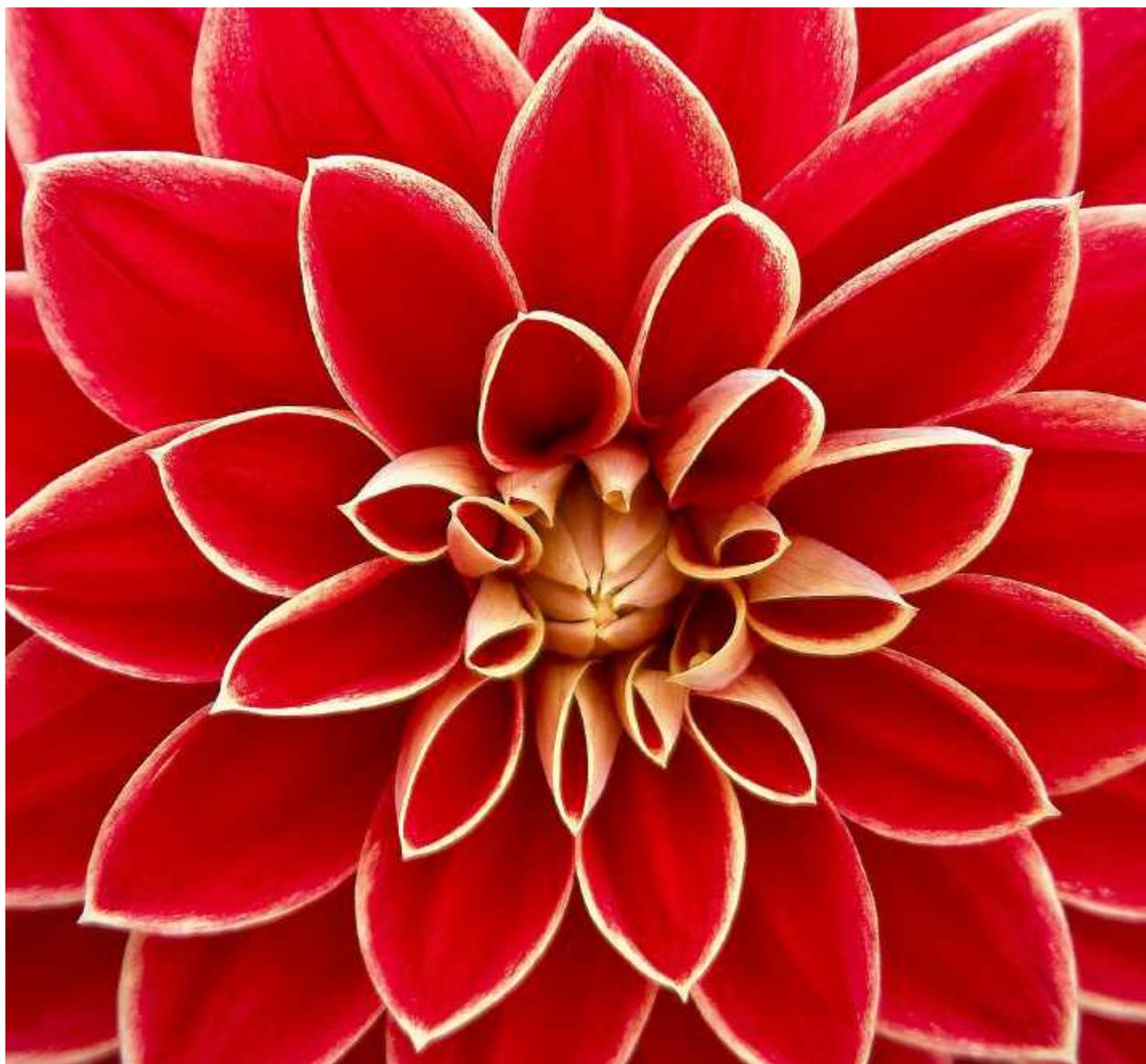


The Wey Forward

Issue 17 September - November 2020

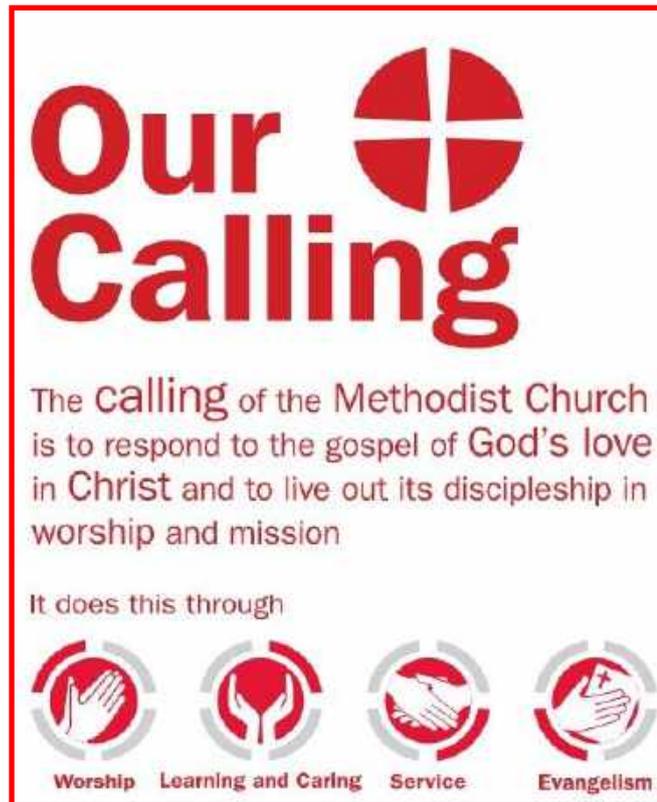


The Wey Valley Methodist Circuit

The Wey Valley Methodist Circuit came into being on 1st September 2016. It was formed by the joining of 13 churches in the Guildford and Woking & Walton-on-Thames circuits. Each church has its own distinctive personality and gifts, and continues to look forward to mutual sharing and support and to responding together to the gospel of God's love in the community and the wider world. (For those not familiar with the term, a "circuit" is an administrative group of Methodist Churches in the same geographical area).

Our churches can be found in :

- * Addlestone
- * Byfleet
- * Cranleigh
- * Godalming
- * Guildford
- * Knaphill
- * Merrow
- * Sheerwater
- * Stoughton
- * Walton-on-Thames
- * West Horsley
- * Weybridge
- * Woking



If you are a visitor or newcomer to the area, or living here and seeking a church for the first time, please use our website - www.veyvalleycircuit.org.uk to find a church that meets your spiritual and pastoral needs. We have included links to the websites of all of our churches in the circuit but you can also contact the Circuit Office for more information. The office is open each weekday morning from 9am to 1pm and Sue Howson, the Circuit Administrator, can be contacted on circuitoffice@veyvalleycircuit.org.uk or 07808 046451.

This quarterly newsletter aims to showcase what is going on around the Circuit, provide relevant information for the forthcoming quarter and offer some thought provoking articles.

Sue Howson

Editor

A Message From Our Superintendent

Dear Friends,

With the production of this edition of the *Wey Forward*, we mark the beginning of a new chapter in the life of our circuit. The circuit has been delighted to welcome Rev Sam Funnell as a circuit minister with pastoral charge of Trinity Woking, and District responsibilities as Assistant Chair. Sam comes from the South Kent Circuit where she has served as Superintendent minister. We are grateful to her previous circuit for releasing Sam a year early to enable her to take up this appointment. We have also been delighted to welcome Rev Adam Payne as a URC minister with pastoral charge of Godalming United Church. Adam has a background in the United Methodist Church (USA). He comes with his wife Kyla and children Lizzy and Molly.

Some reader may remember the days when schools still had ink wells in the school desks. When I was in the “top class” of Junior school (equivalent to year 6 today) we still, at the beginning of the year, had an ink monitor whose job it was to fill the ink well each Monday. Some children had their own fillable fountain pens, which were regarded as something of a luxury, or even the rather new-fangled cartridge pens. I used a scratchy nib attached to a wooden writing implement provided by the school for me to dip into the ink, and no matter how I tried to work neatly the page would often look untidy with blotches of ink and smudges. What joy to turn the page to a clean sheet and start again! The day when we got a new exercise book was a red-letter day – a chance for a fresh new beginning, a new chapter. I was so pleased when the head teacher reluctantly agreed to allow the use of ballpoint pens which were so much easier for clumsy children!

The appointment of a new minister is rather like the opening of a new chapter in the life of the circuit and local church. I recall Hilary coming home from Didsbury College, Manchester, where she was studying for a teaching degree as a young mum. She recounted a conversation she had shared with a tutor, on the subject of working contextually. I think it was in the context of her first teaching practice in Lower Broughton, a working-class area of Salford which had particular needs. The tutor gave some advice to Hilary which has stayed with me over the years. He said, “Don’t forget that you (as the teacher) are part of the context and the context changes when you walk into the classroom!” I have given much thought to the nature of contextual ministry during my time as a circuit minister, and I feel rather sure that the tutor’s remarks could easily be applied to ministry. We naturally ask the new minister to get to know and understand their new context and grow to love their flock, and we also ask the congregation to accept that with the welcome of a new minister in pastoral charge, the local church context has itself changed. That is why in the Methodist Worship Book welcome service the congregation promises to offer the incoming minister their ‘friendship, support, and prayers’.

Looking to the Scriptures for examples of new chapters in the life of a community, King Uzziah came to my mind. You may remember that he was just 16 years old when he succeeded his father, Amaziah, as king of Judah (2 Chronicles, Chapter 26). He had a long reign of 52 years and we are told he was instructed in the fear of God by Zechariah, and he ‘sought God’. As a result, God gave him success and a period of relative stability, based upon the belief that God had made a special covenant with David and his heirs. Uzziah’s accomplishments were truly remarkable, despite the end of his reign being blighted. He reigned around the time when the caste system was developed in India; Babylonian and Chinese astrologers began to understand the movement of the planets; spoked wheels were introduced in

continued.....



Europe; and Homer wrote the Iliad. The end of his long reign brought about great uncertainty and no doubt people feared for the future. Yet in the book of Isaiah we read, 'In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple.' At a moment of transition and uncertainty what sustained the prophet and the people was a fresh vision of the majesty of God. My prayer is that God may grant us a new vision of Himself to sustain us as we enter a new chapter in the life of the circuit.

St Paul expresses this much better than I can, in his prayer for the Christians in Rome: 'May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.' (Romans Chapter 15 verse 13).

May God bless you.

Rev Keith C. Beckingham

Superintendent Minister

Introducing Sam Funnell

Hello! I'm Sam Funnell – looking forward to my move to Woking and into the Wey Valley Circuit, joining the team and looking after Trinity Methodist Church as part of my role. Some of you will be aware that another part of my role will be to care for the Western section of the South East District too – so it's all new, all change and lots of exciting new challenges ahead. As I started my ministry in Surrey, in a way, I feel like I'm almost coming back home and, with my Labrador Daisy at my side, will have lots of fun exploring new walks and places around the area.

My background was in financial service provision (high street banking and then a credit union) before I trained for ministry with the South East Institute for Theological Education, alongside friends from the URC and CoE – some of whom I have had the great joy of reconnecting with over the years. I served in the Purley and Medway Circuits before my last appointment as Superintendent of the newly-formed South Kent Circuit. And now I have come to be with you – which is a great joy.

I am passionate about people being able to know there is a God out there (or in here) that loves them; really keen that we develop good, healthy and sustainable ways of ministry together as the whole people of God and encourage everyone to discern what is their particular calling within that. I truly believe we all have something that we can do – we just need the time, space and occasional prods from God, or other people, to see it!

I look forward to meeting you – and if you see me and Daisy out in our 'dog collars', please say hello!

Sam Funnell



Introducing Adam Payne

Greetings from America by way of Basingstoke!



My name is Adam Payne. I have been blessed by being called as the minister to Godalming United Church, beginning 1st of September. My family and I are recent transplants to this country, having moved to Basingstoke at the end of 2018 to fulfil a long-time dream of living in the UK.

My wife (Kyla) and I are from the small town of Boonville in southern Indiana. I come from a long line of Methodist preachers on my mom's side - family legend holds that line goes back as long as the Methodist movement existed.

I became a Christian in high school, and experienced a call to ministry not long after that, attending the University of Evansville (Evansville, Indiana) and then Christian Theological Seminary (Indianapolis). In 2011, I

was ordained as a Full Elder in the Indiana Conference of the United Methodist Church. I have since served in the United Church of Christ, a "cousin-denomination" to the United Reformed Church.

I have a passion for making the church a welcoming and accessible place to all of God's people and helping non-Christians to see that church is still relevant, and God is still speaking, in a 21st century world.

In December of 2018, Kyla was offered a job as an A&E nurse with the North Hampshire Trust in Basingstoke. Although, we'd never heard of Basingstoke, we jumped on the opportunity to finally live our dream. Doing so meant putting my professional ministry on hold, but God led us to London Street United Reformed Church in Basingstoke, where I have been able to volunteer and help out during the past 18 months. At the beginning of 2020, I received my Certificate of Eligibility in the United Reformed Church and began the search process. In the meantime, I worked as a Team Leader for Hemmersbach, an international IT company, and then full time at London Street URC as Communications Officer.

We have two daughters, Lizzy (12) and Molly (8). Lizzy is ideeply into Doctor Who (just like her father) and all its spin-offs, while Molly's head is filled with "kitties, rainbows, and unicorns".

We are a family of dedicated Anglophiles who enjoy seeing historical sites, eating in pubs, and exploring our new country.

While COVID is making this a challenging time to start a new ministry, I look forward to getting to know my colleagues in the Wey Valley Circuit over the coming months.

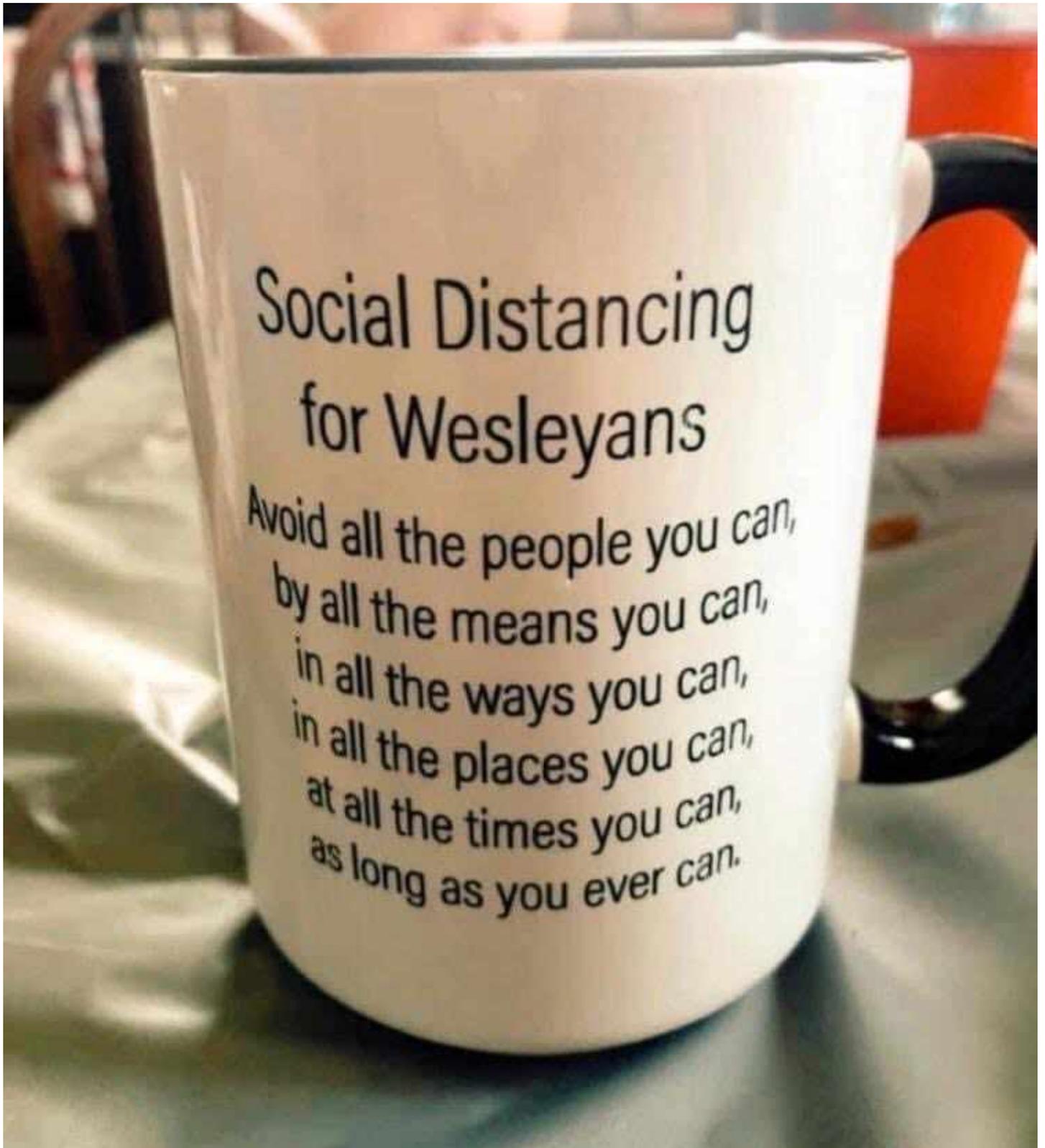
Adam Payne

Services Around the Circuit

See information about licences for streaming and guidance on technique from CCLI at <https://uk.ccli.com/>

Addlestone	About 1/3rd of our members do not have internet access so we distribute hard copies of our church news, Thursday Prayer meeting, Sunday Services and Pastoral letters to them. Several of our members have now joined with Weybridge for their Sunday Zoom Service.
Byfleet	Dave Faulkner will be producing a weekly video. The aim will be for publication at 8:00 am on Sunday, just like the daily reflections we did in the circuit. People could be directed to my YouTube channel at https://bit.ly/DFYTChannel to hit 'Subscribe' and then the bell icon next to it, so that they receive instant notifications when a new video is published. The Superintendent's pastoral letter and worship material received via the Circuit Office are emailed to all the church family where possible otherwise hard copies are hand delivered. The Church is now open for Private Prayer: Sunday 10.00am to 12.00 noon; Wednesday 2.00pm to 4.00pm. The Methodist Church and Government guidelines are strenuously followed to ensure the safety of all. Everyone is welcome!"
Cranleigh	Several of our members take part regularly in the St Mary's Sunday morning services via zoom which are very helpful and encouraging. The orders of services for worship at home are also circulated to all members of the congregation.
Godalming	Full live service at 10.30am*; congregation numbers expected to be usual 80-100 people https://guc.online.church Services are available for viewing later on our website www.guc.org.uk . Or YouTube channel bit.ly/GUCYouTube . Viewing figures have been very positive and include people watching from across the country. *16 August - Rev. Kate Gartside 23 August - Graham Warr 30 August - Rev. Keith Beckingham
Guildford	Service via Zoom each Sunday at 10.30am. Contact Nigel Campion-Smith (nigel.campion-smith@outlook.com) for link and password
Knaphill	Dave Faulkner will be producing a weekly video. The aim will be for publication at 8:00 am on Sunday, just like the daily reflections we did in the circuit. People could be directed to my YouTube channel at https://bit.ly/DFYTChannel to hit 'Subscribe' and then the bell icon next to it, so that they receive instant notifications when a new video is published.
Merrow	No current plans to venture down the path of "on-line public worship". We will continue to publicise on our website and in our weekly News sheet all the exciting initiatives across the circuit and wider which are successfully embracing the new available technologies. Provisionally intending to hold morning services from Sunday 18th October with Rosemary Lee. We will open our Church for Silent Prayer on Wednesday from 10.00am - 11.00am from Wednesday Sept 16th, initially for four weeks so we can monitor the response.
Sheerwater	Zoom services publicized on Facebook, St Michael's Shared Church . Contact Tracey Francis (office@stmichaels sheerwater.org.uk) for link and password.
Stoughton	Asif writes a reflection every week which is emailed to the church family members, as is Keith's weekly pastoral letter. The weekly district service is sent out and so are various other links to watch church services through different Methodist resources. Neil Champion is updating Stoughton's website - putting both Keith's and Asif's letters on the home page along with some of the many links to resources on the circuit, district, UK Methodist and singing the faith websites.
Walton	Walton hold a weekly Sunday Tea and Fellowship Zoom meeting at 4pm for their congregation to come together: Weekly reflections by Julia Monaghan on Walton's website - https://www.waltonmethodist.com/weekly-reflections either PowerPoint or video. We will be open for private prayer each Thursday for 1 hour between 2.00pm and 3.00pm
W. Horsley	No on-line service but use service sheets (email and hand delivered) or join with others through the links given on this sheet
Weybridge	10.30am Zoom service each Sunday. Contact Weybridgemethodistoffice@gmail.com for link and password. 16 Aug Rev Sydney Samuel Lake 23 Aug Rev Dr Peter Howson 30 Aug Mr Dave Paterson
Woking	Weekly service (at 10.00am) and Foundry Worship (at 5pm) alternate Sundays both via Zoom. For services contact Jackie Case or Dan Warr Schori (office@trinitywoking.org.uk) for link and password. For Foundry Worship please check with Hugh Bowerman (hugh.bowerman@gmail.com) Sue Waddington is arranging for a Junior Church zoom service (11am) each week. Trinity is also now open for private prayer, with strict social distancing measures in place, every Wed from 10.30am – 12 noon and for gathered services each Sunday at 10am

Time For A Smile



News from around the Circuit

Addlestone

To all of our church family, we hope we are managing to keep in touch doing all we can to serve our Lord and Saviour, keeping in contact with our members and helping them in every way we can. Internet technology has been a great asset to those able to use it, especially our Sunday virtual Zoom services. A recent issue of the services available is shown on a separate page on our website as an example.

The Covid-19 pandemic has created difficulties for us all and has come at a time when some changes in church appointments have become necessary due to some of our very loyal and committed church officers having found it necessary to retire due to health problems. The new church stewards and appointments in other offices are shown in the Who's Who page of our website.



We pray that our Father in Heaven will be with all those in need. For all our members, those retiring from duties, those in new appointments and all members affected directly and indirectly by the pandemic.

We pray especially for our two members who, after spending a long period in hospital are recovering at home. Also for our member still waiting for an urgently needed operation. Be with them and those caring for them. Help us Lord to give them all the care and support to help them in every way we are able.

Thank-you to all our members who have helped during this Covid-19 pandemic period, those helping with the distribution of services and meeting information to those without internet access and for those taking on new responsibilities in the church. Thank-you to Weybridge church for inviting us to join them at their Sunday morning virtual Zoom services. It may not be the same as being able to worship together but a very acceptable alternative until the church can be reopened for Sunday services again.

With all the difficulties we are facing it was a relief to be inspired when I watched a recording of Songs of Praise, filmed at Easter in Birmingham. I was inspired first by listening to the singing of the hymn 'See what a morning, gloriously bright', hymn 309 in our Singing the Faith hymn book. This was followed by an interview with the minister and parishioners of a recently opened church in a former disused warehouse. It opened with a view of a large queue of people entering, and later the minister telling of his vision when first opening the church. To teach the good news that Jesus brings and the way he can change lives. A faith that is relevant and conversational. A service that was not 'happy clappy' but certainly 'happy'. A large number of those attending were new, or nearly new to Christianity and left with the comment that they loved worshipping there, and with hymns praising the Lord. It reminded me of a song very meaningful to me 'Love Changes Everything'. Not written as a religious song but every word expressing the result that comes about if you have the Love of God in your heart. We all need inspiration at this time – Let Jesus teach us the way.



Fred Rowe

Byfleet

So much to be thankful for! How often do we stop and thank God for all his many blessings even at this difficult time. Here at Byfleet we have the gift of a beautiful, spacious, airy building we call our Church. At the heart of the village we are currently able to open wide our doors for people to come, safely, to sit for a while in private prayer (Sundays 10.00am – 12 noon and Wednesdays 2.00pm – 4.00pm). And by the time you read this, Government and Methodist guidance permitting, we expect you will be able to come and join us each Sunday morning as we gather together for worship, although it will be strange, as Methodists, not to be able to sing!

The celebration of Harvest is an annual event in any church calendar but this year **SUNDAY 13 SEPTEMBER** feels particularly special as we gather together under one roof. This will indeed be a day of thanksgiving:

- For the unprecedented warmth that followed a wet winter that together have produced bumper crops;
- For those who have laboured in fields and factories and shops to keep us fed;
- For those who have looked after our health and well-being and supported the bereaved during these difficult months;
- Through our **Harvest Gifts** which will be given to the Woking Foodbank of which we are a part, acknowledging the work of all foodbanks and the generosity of donors across the country;
- Through our annual **Gift Day** which, together with our regular giving ensures our premises are maintained and kept safe and secure whilst enabling us to make our contribution to the financial needs of the Circuit and Connexion
- For our heritage here at Byfleet as, together with our Anglican friends along the road, we open our premises in celebration of our history as we mark **Heritage Open Weekend**.
- And, most of all, as we share in our first **Service of Holy Communion** in five months which will be led by the Rev David Faulkner

To all of you across the Circuit, Byfleet Methodist Church sends greetings and good wishes, and the continued hope that you will stay safe and well!

Margaret Watts



Cranleigh

Despite the continuing uncertainty about the future of the Coronavirus in our corner of Surrey (and we have suffered far less than many other areas) we have reasons to be optimistic as we are able to see progress at last in our roof repairs. This is thanks to funding acquired from members' efforts, concerts, church lunches, coffee mornings, and of course by diligent searching by members of the Finance Committee, which has resulted in donations from places which might not at first have seemed likely to be fruitful! However, we could not have embarked on these costly and entirely unexpected works without the funding from the Circuit, for which we are extremely grateful and I now express our heartfelt thanks to you all for your kind support. If the weather remains good for the works, we may soon be able to let our re-furbished hall to a nursery, as before. (Cranleigh is an expanding village and we are told there are insufficient places in existing nurseries to meet the growing demand). Our own members were hosting a mother and baby group within the church itself before the lockdown, and of course we will hope soon to welcome back our refugees from Syria, who also met us in our church. The dance groups, our oldest paying tenants, actually used the back of the church after the carpet was removed, so at least we were able to acquire some funds in this way. Most of these activities would probably be more suitably catered for in a re-furbished hall!

I mentioned the Coronavirus at the start of this article, and I hope none of you have suffered losses or personal incapacity owing to this dreadful disease. We have to realise however that any future plans may still have to be put on hold until we can safely meet together (indoors particularly). Services in church can only be held within strict guidelines, and it follows that the same will be true of all other church-based activities. Elderly though most of us are, we try to be positive, and we pray in faith that the way forward will be shown to us.

God bless us all,

Glenda Sewell



Mission Supper

Save the Date

Saturday 20th March 2021

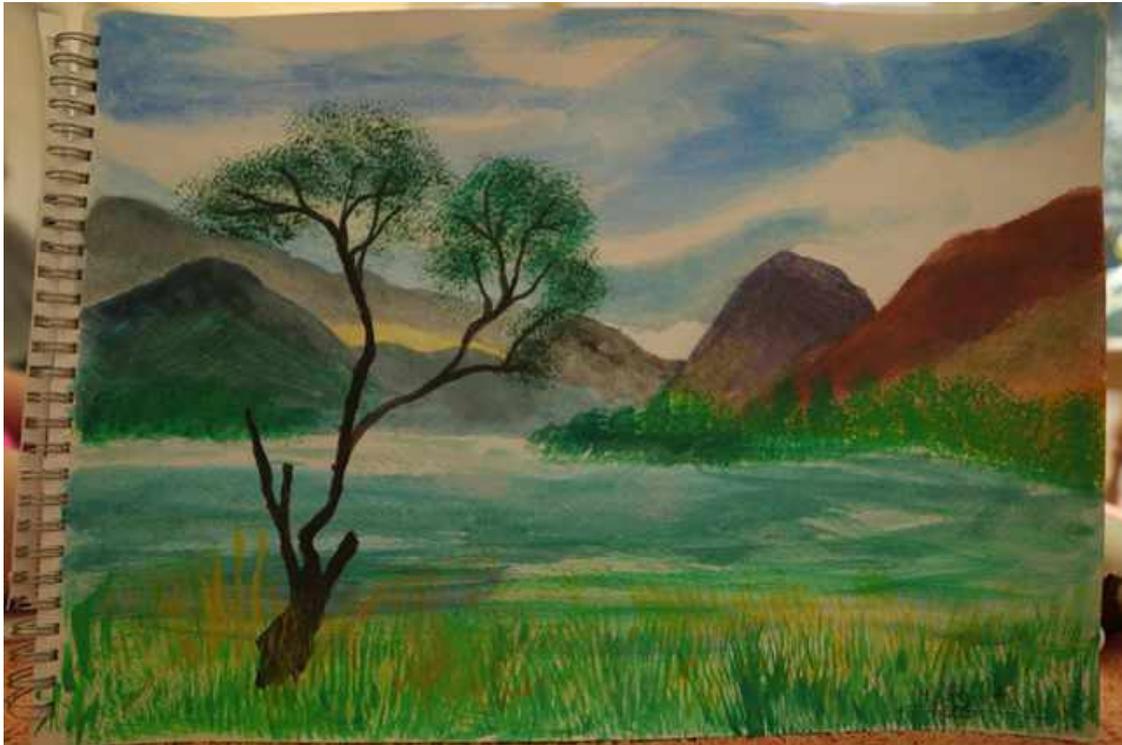
at

Trinity Woking,

The speaker will be Rev Conrad Hicks,
Director of Global Relationships
in the World Relationships Team of the
Methodist Church.

Activities for Lockdown

In 'normal' times I attend a weekly art group. During lockdown the 'girls' have missed getting together for our art group but we have kept in touch and produced our own paintings. Below are two of mine; a landscape of the Lake District and one of the ruins of Brighton Pier.



Carole Smith (Weybridge)

Progress With Building Work At Cranleigh

As the Circuit Meeting has been very generous in supporting Cranleigh (both with our major alterations completed a year ago and more recently with the essential replacement of the church hall roof), I thought that readers of 'The Way Forward' might like to know that the work to replace the roof is now well under way.

The contractors (Cheesmur, who completed the side extension very satisfactorily) started on site at the beginning of July and the work is scheduled to be completed by mid-September. The hall is in fact the oldest part of the premises - the original "mission hall" built around 1840. This necessitated expert surveys to ascertain that the roof did not contain any asbestos and, as horse hair was used in the original construction, that there were no traces of anthrax - I am pleased to say that none of either was found!

Due to the assiduous efforts of Stella Halloran (our Assistant Treasurer) some external "non-Methodist" funding has been secured to assist with this latest work, including a grant from the Gatwick Airport Community Fund - so we should not complain about aircraft noise over Cranleigh, although the skies have of course been noticeably quiet for the last five months.

Many thanks to the Circuit for supporting us. When the roof is completed we will be in a much better position to realise the potential of the premises for community outreach. This was the main driving force underlying the plans for the new accessible side premises with modern facilities including a new kitchen, toilets, meeting room and vestry.

James Strawson, Cranleigh Methodist Church

More Smiles

While repairing a picture frame, a lady had to replace some chipped gold leaf. She asked at the hardware shop, "Do you have any gilt?" The shopkeeper replied. "Yes; sometimes it's overwhelming,"

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While watching her baby brother being christened in church, a little girl caught the attention of the minister and she whispered, "Behind his ears too, please."

Godalming United Church

We have continued to "witness, worship and serve" with our weekly virtual Sunday morning services streamed real-time at <https://guc.online.church> every Sunday at 10:30am, available for viewing later on our website www.guc.org.uk. or YouTube channel bit.ly/GUCYouTube. A huge Thank You goes to Richard August for assembling videoed material from contributors within the church family, from the internet, and from his extensive electronic archive. Thanks too to all the preachers who have led these services from their own homes. We feel fortunate indeed to have had such a wealth of spiritual leadership across these difficult months – colleagues from within the Anglican church as well as the Methodist/URC community, and all services listed in the Circuit Plan have been maintained. The services have had a wide take-up nationally. Recently we received an appreciative email from a couple living on the west coast of Scotland who have found our weekly services especially helpful – and, being 2½ hours' drive from the nearest Methodist church, have taken real pleasure in sharing in the special character of Methodist worship.

Meanwhile Church Council has been busy overseeing preparations for a return to something like normality. The first 10:30am Sunday service in the church will be on August 30. We will all receive details of procedures beforehand –social distancing, masks, and no singing. Meanwhile, streamed services will continue. There will, at other times, be some limited access for private prayer – please phone 01483 420459. Our new Minister, Rev Alan Payne, will be moving into the Manse with his family across August, and he will be inducted on September 26 – but, because of Covid-19 restrictions, full details of the service have yet to be worked out.

Bob Weighton 29 March 1908 – 18 May 2020

Finally, it was with sadness that, earlier in the summer, we heard of the death of the world's oldest man – Bob Weighton. A resident of Alton, he was until recent years a familiar face at GUC through his family (Peter and Sue Weighton) and was a well-loved and respected member of our wider church family.

Born in Hull, he trained as an engineer in the North-East. Always a strong member of the Presbyterian (later Congregational) Church he went out as a teaching missionary to Taiwan in the 1930s. With the coming of the War in the Pacific he and his growing family were evacuated to Canada, where Bob used his skills working for the Air Force. In 1946 the Weightons returned to the UK and Bob lectured at the college which was later to become City University.

Bob was an extraordinary man - and not simply because of his amazing age. A role model to all, he lived his life interested in and engaged with all kinds of people from across the world, viewing everyone as his brother or sister and believing in loving, accepting and caring for one another. He had many, many friendships and read and talked politics, theology, ecology (he cared greatly for the environment) and more right up until his death. The second bedroom in his flat was a workshop, filled with furniture, windmills and puzzles he made and sold in aid of charity, often from bits of wood pulled from skips. Bob celebrated his last birthday behind closed doors in lockdown, describing the world as "a bit of a mess" in the crisis. When asked about the key to his longevity he simply replied, "I just haven't died." He previously had told the BBC: "I think laughter is extremely important. Most of the trouble in the world is caused by people taking themselves too seriously."

Until the very end Bob remained the witty, kind, knowledgeable, conversationalist father, grandfather and great grandfather of the Weighton clan, and he will be greatly missed.

Nancy Wilks



Shelley's Poem - Written at the Start of Lockdown

This is a time we must all stay in,
To protect our mothers, our fathers, and all of our kin.
And although this may seem like an impossible task,
Please think of the doctors and nurses now living in masks.
They are the heroes who fight in this war,
All we have to do is stay in and close our door.
They are the ones who are trying to save all humanity,
Yet some people are still out, this is surely plain insanity.
We have all wished for time off to spend more time at home,
Yet now that we are, some seem to just whine and moan.
Have you ever thought this may be the world trying to say,
In fact TELLING us humans that we need to change TODAY.
To appreciate our world, both the land and the sea,
Maybe it's now time to appreciate mother nature and let her be free.
To appreciate the landscape, the stars, the trees,
To be outside with loved ones in the warm summer breeze.
So with this gift of time being home safe indoors,
We all sit, think and appreciate and give a big applause,
To all those working, keyworkers on the front line,
Thank you for protecting us, from everyone in the world's homes and mine.

Walton Methodist Players

11TH—13TH MARCH AT 7:30PM

Well, our optimism was misplaced and we are unable to present our play in September 2020.

However Walton Methodist Players are still busy rehearsing (via Zoom) with the hope of delivering our production in March 2021!

The cast are now word perfect but have no idea of their movements around the stage so still work to do.

Meanwhile

Save the new dates!

11 - 13 March 2021

Walton Methodist Players Present



Tickets: £12

Walton Methodist Church Hall
Terrace Road, Walton-on-Thames
KT12 2SR

Visit waltonmethodist.com/wmp

My Lockdown Experience

This has been different to anything I have known in my lifetime. I have struggled with lockdown, I am not going to lie. Not being able to see my partner, Tony, or his family has been the most difficult, when you have gone from seeing someone every day to now just a phone call or a video call has been very emotional and hard, but these things are sent to test us. I have felt that my faith has helped me throughout this. I do believe that Covid-19 was an act of God sent to test us.

I have spent my time having a sort out of stuff as well as struggling with tooth problems which are still on going. I have done some baking, reading, painting and craft.

I have taken part in a quiz every day from the drama group, which has also helped to keep the mind and brain working. I have also enjoyed watching boxsets on the TV as well as the musicals on YouTube that have been filmed in the West End. I have also been reading books that I have not got round to reading before and have been continuing reading the Bible.

I have found the Zoom church services a big help and it is nice to see everyone on a Sunday morning. It would be nice if a Zoom meeting could carry on after lockdown, perhaps with a Bible group and also if the church is closed at any time.

I think after this we should all carry on writing letters, phoning people to see if they are okay and take more time out of our lives to check on others.

Claire Smith (Weybridge)

The Mine Online

Lay Employees Conference 2020

21st-25th September
A Learning Network Event

WELCOME

   @LearningNetSI

Sessions are being held across Monday 21 - Friday 25 September at 9.45am - 10.45am in their secure online meeting room.

This is now an online event, running in the Learning and Development's online meeting room. This is accessible via Android and Apple smartphones and tablets, Macs and PCs, and via local-rate telephone call. Instructions will be provided after registering to attend.

For bookings and more information <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-mine-online-conference-for-lay-employees-in-the-si-region-tickets-82243700121>

Physical distancing

It's ok that you didn't clean the house today,
It's ok that you didn't run six miles,
It's ok that you don't know how to make soufflé,
Or that you're not always full of smiles,
Don't worry that you haven't learnt to crochet,
Don't worry if you feel a little blue,
It's ok to relax sometimes,
Just do the things that make you, you.
Take this time to re-evaluate,
The things you really need,
Enjoy the sun that's right outside,
Read that book you want to read,
Chat to a neighbour that you've never met,
Re-read your favourite bible verse,
Make sure that you're eating well,
And just remember, it could be worse.
Remember you are loved,
Remember to be safe,
Phone a friend, say a prayer,
Remember to have faith.

Leah Plant

Circuit Prayer Diary

The Prayer Diary is produced on a quarterly basis by Rev Claire Hargreaves and is available on the Circuit website where it can be accessed in several ways:-

- It has its own bespoke calendar so you can see all the prayers for the coming months. From the Home page click on Calendar and in the drop down boxes choose Circuit Prayer Diary and the month you are interested in
- If you just click on Calendar it automatically shows all events from around the Circuit and the Prayer Diary will be included
- Each day the Prayer for that day is displayed on the Home Page under Coming Events (on the right-hand side of the screen on a PC; scroll down a little on a smart phone)
- The pdf is available under Publications, Circuit Prayer Diary (third one down)
- The pdf also appears each quarter in the News section of the website

The Prayer Diary is also circulated to churches in Word and pdf format for inclusion in newsletters or for printing off.

If you have any queries please do let me know.

Sue Howson

Guildford St Mary's

Simple things have been prominent in our lives during lockdown. Some have been matters of pleasure; perhaps a phone call to keep in touch, the sound of birdsong with less traffic and aircraft noise and, for those of us with gardens, watching flowers and fruit emerge as normal. It might be the delivery of something to our house or a gesture of kindness. Other simple things might mark for us the frustrations of lockdown; the inability to see family and friends, the lack of a hug and being unable to attend church as normal.

There's been comment from people who lived through WW2 on how the pandemic has been more difficult to cope with than wartime because of the inability to worship together, to socialise and comfort each other and support each other. Thank God that we have modern means of communication which, for many of the population, help to keep us in touch.

With Church buildings closed, those means of communication have been equally important for church activities and sense of community, with Zoom, YouTube etc, and people's readiness to engage with them; a Godsend. Indeed, they've even offering some advantages in giving us opportunities to explore new resources and creativity. How we take forward those positive parts of online worship and integrate them in physical worship requires careful thought. Whilst the technology of online worship excludes some it has enabled others to participate who could not physically attend church and encouraged others to participate in worship more readily than in physical church services.

During lockdown, our builders completed their part of the transformation of St Mary's and we now have to work on the finishing touches. It's deeply frustrating not to be able at this time to fling wide the (new) doors for worship and for people to share the space in the way we hoped. However, it remains a place of opportunity and we hope soon to offer simple things such as opening for people to come to pray and soak up the centuries-long spirituality for which St Mary's is renowned.

Whilst church buildings may have been closed during lockdown, the Church has continued to show the love of Christ through caring ministries. In Guildford our ecumenical Town Chaplaincy had to suspend Street Angels but our Community Angels befriending project has grown dramatically, offering regular telephone support to people of all ages as they try to cope with times of loneliness, isolation and frustration. Other agencies have been grateful that the churches have offered this service.

It was great at the very end of July to welcome Street Angels back on duty to show Christian witness amidst a changed Guildford nightlife. As restaurants and pubs have reopened, those who run them, their door staff, police, town centre management and taxi drivers have been pressing to see Street Angels back with their calming influence. As the Angels can't at this time operate from their usual base in the YMCA, St Mary's is accommodating them for the time being. As well as their excitement at being back on duty, the Street Angels have felt inspired by setting out from the Church to exercise their ministry and to spend their breaks in our sacred space, feeling it underscores their Christian commission. Another simple thing which makes a difference

Nigel Campion-Smith

‘Expectations’ – (Matthew 11 : 16-19)

[Jesus said] ¹⁶ ‘But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market-places and calling to one another,

¹⁷ “We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.”

¹⁸ For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, “He has a demon”; ¹⁹ the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, “Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax-collectors and sinners!” Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.’

That little passage from Matthew’s Gospel was set for the week beginning Sunday 5th July, but it always makes me smile, because my thoughts go to the expectations people have of their **ministers**. In our Wey Valley Circuit, we will shortly have a new minister at Godalming United Church (Rev Adam Payne), one at Trinity, Woking (Rev Sam Funnell) and, in 12 months’ time, a new minister to replace Rev Asif Das, probably at Merrow, Stoughton and Horsley churches.



No doubt there will be many and varied expectations of the new ministers! Even though I have been a supernumerary minister for nearly 12 years, I have very clear memories of the vastly different expectations members had when I was in the ‘active’ ministry. People wanted their minister to be a man or woman of prayer, versed in Scripture and theologically competent to teach their members and interpret the signs of the times; but they also wanted the minister to be out and about visiting and furthering God’s mission in the community! We were expected to preach with conviction and serious intent, but always with a smile on our faces. We were expected to maintain the sacred traditions of the Church, whilst at the same time embracing contemporary forms of worship. We had to be conservative *and* radical in our theology and . . . well, I could go on!

I think Jesus must have felt the same, and when we talk about a ‘post-modern’ or a ‘consumer’ attitude to worship and mission, it’s nothing new, really. Perhaps **St Paul** hit the nail on the head when he told the Corinthians “*I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some*” (I Corinthians 9:22).

When we contemplate new ministerial arrivals in our churches, may we remember that though only some are ordained, we are *ALL* ministers! All of us seek to represent Christ in what we say, and do, and – most importantly – the kind of people we are. May we help and encourage each other to use our varied gifts to serve our Master and the mission of his Church.



A Prayer: Loving God, in such changing times as these, help us to remain faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ, and true to the gospel of love, peace and justice that he proclaimed and embodied. Whatever our age, sex, colour or disposition, may others see a reflection – however faint – of our Lord in us. We thank you for the challenge of each day, and ask you to bless us in the name of our Lord and saviour, Jesus Christ,

Amen.

Barrie Tabraham

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Knaphill

Lockdown has been a difficult time for everyone who is involved with *Clothes4U pre-loved clothes with TLC*, but pleased to say we have been able to continue to support our local, and much wider community. We spent around 13 hours sorting through donations but that enabled us to collate bags of clothing to deliver to families (or for them to be collected from us). We have also helped the NHS clothe patients so we feel very proud to have been able to continue to help families.

As yet we don't have a plan to reopen but hope we will sometime soon. Please continue directing people to us if they need our help, and we will be very happy to support them. To know more about *Clothes4U pre-loved clothes with TLC*, contact us through clothes@knaphillmethodist.co.uk

It has been important to keep in contact with each other during this pandemic. Knaphill have done a number of things to enable the church to do this. We recently published our Summer Magazine, which included articles from the church family on what they got up to during lockdown, as well as information to be shared on church matters. A good communication tool, which was sent out to the KMC Family via email our magazine can be downloaded from the comfort of their own homes. Those without the technology to download the Magazine, were sent a printed copy in the post, or hand delivered through their letterboxes.

If you would like to see our Magazine, click on the link below and you will be able to download and see it for yourselves! It is also in the Publications section of the Circuit website.

knaphill-methodist-church.com/content/pages/documents/1595012724.pdf

The Pastoral Leaders (and myself) have spent many hours phoning people, particularly those on their own, or who have not got email or are unfamiliar with other technical communication methods such as texting, WhatsApp, Facebook or the phrase "downloading."

A KMC Family email address was set up at the beginning of lockdown through which I send pastoral letters and other circuit information to the wider church, as well as prayer diaries and other church information that, prior to lockdown would have been available through our weekly Notices, handed out on a Sunday morning.

Rev Dave Faulkner sends a link to his video sermon for each Sunday to me for forwarding on through the KMC Family email, along with a text version.

We have been fortunate to hold church business meetings and fellowship meetings with the help of Zoom, thus speaking together in groups from our own homes.

On Sunday morning 2 August we held private prayer sessions in our Church Worship Area. A lot of work was carried out by a small number of people to enable this event to happen, risk assessments, cleaning, implementing social distancing rules and much more. Thank you to all who helped make this happen and to those who took part.

Yvette Wright

Merrow

In the opening remarks of Merrow's article for the June issue of The Way Forward I wrote that we had held an Annual General Meeting after worship on Sunday 15 March at which we discussed the developing Covid-19 situation. We agreed that for future services we would continue to follow government advice..... Five months later we are still endeavouring to follow both the Government's and Connexion's guidance and advice as we seek to determine the most appropriate timeline for reopening our property for possible silent prayer, public worship and lettings.



In preparation for a Church Council Meeting this evening (as I write this) we have had to acquaint ourselves with all the complexities of rigorous risk assessments and other procedures concerning safety checks. Just this morning we have now been informed that from 8 August face coverings will now be mandatory and they should be worn during worship to help reduce the spread of the virus....

I have just been asked whether this means that any future Yoga or Pilates group meeting on our premises would also have to wear masks which could be quite uncomfortable. By the time you read this I am sure all will be clear! On a similar note I must admit I was slightly perplexed when I was told recently that I would have to wear a mask for my dental appointment but discovered that this was just while I was sitting in the waiting room and I could take it off for my actual check up!

But I digress. Back to the future (and a time machine as per in the 1985 film with that title would be very useful....) When this issue comes out in September, hopefully we will all have a much clearer idea of what "worship" and "fellowship" this Autumn in Merrow will look like in its many varied forms. Currently it is difficult to predict with any confidence as prevailing circumstances seem to change on an almost daily basis.

What is a given is that whatever decisions are arrived at will be the result of much prayerful consideration.

Hugh Bradley

Update on the Pilgrimage to the Holy Land led by Rev Claire Hargreaves and Helen Belsham (organised by McCabe Pilgrimages)

Monday 3 - Monday 10 May, 2021

You may remember that we were planning to hold a meeting for those who might be interested in taking up our invitation to join us on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land next year. Unfortunately, that meeting was cancelled due to lockdown.

Realistically, we are not in a position to say whether we will be able to go in May. The tour company, McCabe is hoping that pilgrimages to the Holy Land might start again in October this year but this will depend on a number of potentially changing factors, not least the integrity of the pilgrimage experience. It is also hard to know at this stage whether any of us would feel ready to undertake a trip of this type.

Nevertheless, we would still love to give you the opportunity to experience for yourself the sites where the most important events of Jesus' life and ministry took place, and would invite you to get in touch if you are interested in finding out more, without any commitment.

When the situation becomes more clear, we will again plan to hold a meeting to provide more information about the pilgrimage. Whether you have been before or you are new to the Holy Land, you will be moved and enriched as we journey, pray and learn together. Reading the gospels will never be the same again!

The cost will be in the region of £2,000 per person sharing an ensuite room on a full board basis (flights included). We will stay in hotels in Tiberias and Jerusalem and be visiting Nazareth, Galilee, Bethlehem and Jerusalem including the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Enquiries : helenebelsham@icloud.com or claire.hargreaves@methodist.org.uk



Inside the Church of the Holy Sepulchre,



Preparing for Holy Communion by the Sea of Galilee

Helen Belsham

Looking For The Rainbow

As a result of the Coronavirus, my Christian band, "Breeze" (who normally work at Walton Methodist Church), have been unable to meet. However, I have tried to continue my own music ministry, so have embarked on a journey to try to write one Christian song per month for 2020, in response to an invitation from Resound Worship. https://www.resoundworship.org/page/About_Resound_Worship.

Around 180 Christian songwriters signed up to each submit a new song every month to invite comment from each other. I have found it very encouraging to get constructive and helpful comment from songwriters in UK, USA and Europe.

It occurred to me that the Circuit might like to be aware of the song that I have submitted for the April challenge which, from feedback that I am getting, seems to be helping folk, (particularly those coping with bereavement), at this difficult time. The song is called "Looking For The Rainbow" and was in response to the challenge to write a song in the context of the Coronavirus. Walton Methodist Church have very kindly embedded the video of it in the "A Place Of Hope" page on their website and Trinity, Woking, (where I am a member), have kindly published the You Tube Link on our weekly newsletter.



My aim was to try to encourage and give hope during these dark times. I wanted to say that we often see God's glory at the darkest times just like a rainbow that is really striking when it forms in front of a very dark cloud with the sun in front of it. I use the idea of God's promise in Genesis 9 v13 and allude to Ezeziel 1 v28 and Revelation 4 v3 where the rainbow is used to show the glory of God.

Glen Penfold

The YouTube link is:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iHVWq12oqYg>

And it can also be found on the News section of the Circuit website.

Glen's other songs can be found on his YouTube Christian Song Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwOWhwJt87y3gkklMuz2tPQ>

Walton - on - Thames

Here at Walton we have had an excellent few months trying other ways of meeting up. We have a regular tea and fellowship by Zoom on Sunday afternoons. This has been good as various groups from the church have been able to take the fellowship part. We have also had a number of friends joining us who for various reasons would not be able to join us on a Sunday morning in the Church building. On a couple of occasions a group of ladies baked cakes and these were packed into bags and delivered to those families who would be on the Zoom, so that during the chat time we could share our cakes. This has brought some interesting comments from those who love cake!!!

We have two WhatsApp prayer groups; one that goes from 6pm on a Friday and one from 8am on a Saturday. These have brought different people together and has enabled us to know more about the problems that some members are having and some blessings that they are receiving.

One such was a 2/1 degree for the son of one of our members. We knew what a difficult time he had been having. Now we hear of a mother being able to see her disabled daughter after 4 months of lock down. Having lost a well-loved dog one family has now managed to get a puppy.

As a loving community, we were all shocked by the events involving George Floyd. So we arranged a Zoom meeting to see how we as a group of practising Christians could find out more and see what we could do to prevent any more incidents like this happening. So now, we have some posters in our Narthex window explaining our position and giving hope for the future. We also have someone appointed who will remind us occasionally that we need to keep this in our prayers. Catherine's article and copy of the poster follows this piece.

In July a Covid-19 task group was set up to look at opening the church, first for prayer then for some services and for lettings. This has been a challenging task as many of you will know as there is a wealth of information about and it is changing almost daily.

Through trials and tribulations and a lot of prayer we have finally got all the information together to open the church for prayer. So July 30 was our first day open. We have tried hard to keep the worship area looking like a worship area even though there do have to be statutory signs up.

So at 2pm we opened our doors it was a good sunny afternoon, music was playing and Barney Prayer Bear was there too. 7 people came to pray. It was heart-warming to see Sydney Samuel in one part of the church and Julia Monaghan in another part of the church saying their private prayers in their own church. It was good to see members of the congregation coming into the church after more than four months.

We also have the advantage of a good grassed area at the side of the church with trees and a bench so if people want to they can have a chat after the prayer time they can.

Looking forward we are hoping to be able to set up for communion services in the church before we go back to full worship services.

Jeannette Curtis

Black Lives Matter

On 25th May 2020, George Floyd was killed by an American police officer, who had restrained him by pressing his leg over George Floyd's neck for 8 minutes and 46 seconds. This act was captured on camera and spread through social media like nothing before. It sent shock waves throughout the world and sparked many protests. These ripples reached Walton-on-Thames Methodist Church, and some of our members felt the need to take a stand and wanted to acknowledge what was happening, and show our love and compassion for those who are oppressed.

On Thursday 25th June we held a special meeting, via Zoom, to discuss what we as a Church could do. We had a cross section of views. We did not want to align ourselves with any sort of political movement, but we **did** want to support our black brothers and sisters. We proposed putting some posters in our window. Some were worried about damage which might occur to our church, if posters were displayed, others almost welcomed damage as it would show people had read them and had engaged with the contents! We had a very fruitful discussion about which posters we'd like to display and through listening to each other came up with a plan.

Many of us felt that we had never really debated racism or understood it. We looked to the future and Rev Sydney Samuel encouraged us to think about having an annual service when we thought about "Truth and Reconciliation" and mentioned the South African experience. We also wanted to organise, when we are able to, a day dedicated to racism, where we could have speakers come in and talk to us about their experiences and have material available to educate ourselves.

We also decided to have a dedicated page on our website about combatting racism and encouraged everyone to send in articles/ ideas. We have a long way to go and this is an organic ongoing issue which we continue to engage with - but we have taken the first steps!

Catherine Heffernan

Statement on racism from the Rev Dr Jonathan Hustler, Secretary of the Conference

The brutal killing of George Floyd, who died at the hands of police officers in Minneapolis, has prompted a wave of anger and revulsion around the world. As Christian people, we are appalled that someone could die in such a fashion and appalled also at the continued injustice which many Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people experience in many parts of the world, including the United Kingdom, and in many institutions, including, shamefully, the Methodist Church in Britain.

We therefore welcome and endorse the call of the 'Black Lives Matter' movement for radical action in addressing the causes of this injustice. The Methodist Church in Britain believes that racism is a denial of the gospel. However, we have to recognize that we have not eradicated the problem from our Church, despite the excellent work of many over several decades; in the last year we have redoubled our efforts to do so and are actively working on the implementation of our 'Inclusive Methodist Church' strategy which commits to challenging all forms of discrimination and creating a Church where people from every background are welcome and are safe from abuse and discrimination.

Such a Church will celebrate and not be afraid of diversity; it will be disciplined and uncompromising in its refusal to tolerate any form of racism; it will work to encourage the vocation of those from minority groups to serve in positions of senior leadership; and it will be one in which all people can be confident of the welcome that they will receive as they share in worship and ministry with us. We repent of the ways that we have fallen short of that in the past and of our slowness in changing our ways and we continue to look for ways in which we can witness to the all-encompassing love of God and become the transformation that we long to be. 'Only the Spirit's power can fit us for this hour': we pray, 'Come, Holy Spirit, come!'

At Walton-on-Thames Methodist Church
our motto is:

All Are Welcome

Since 1978 the policy of the Methodist Church in Great Britain has been:

“Racism is a **sin** and contrary to the imperatives of the Gospel...As Christian people we believe that with the coming of Jesus Christ a new relationship was initiated between people of different origins”

At Walton-on-Thames Methodist Church we strive to help **all** those who are in need and welcome **everyone** into our church.

Right now it is our **black brothers and sisters** who need our **support**. So we stand by their side as we say:

Black Lives Matter

St Michael's, Sheerwater

Last autumn St Michael's set up a Pop-up Café for parents and children after school. The idea was that families could come to the church and have tea and play in a safe place. It gave parents time to talk to church members and children were offered games and crafts after their tea. It ran very successfully for 4 months but we had to close in March when the lockdown started.

It is difficult to cater for children in church at the moment but we were concerned about these families especially over the summer holidays when all educational provision came to an end. So we decided to deliver craft materials to families on the estate. Each week four of us set out with a bag for each child. The bag contains the materials to make a model (a turtle in Week 1) a few quiz sheets and a small surprise item – a tube of bubbles or a packet of raisins. Children will be encouraged to make their own Coral Reef during the holidays and come and display it at the end. There will be a prize for the best one.



We hope we are offering a real service to families on the estate. So far the bags have been well-received and it gives us an opportunity to make regular contact with them and make sure everyone is safe and well. The current project will last 5 weeks and then we will reconsider.

For the volunteers it is always a wonderful moment when the door opens and big smiling faces appear to receive this week's pop-up bag.

Tracey Francis



Methodist Homes (MHA)

Like the nation we are very much stuttering and finding our way forward as we emerge from the first wave of Covid-19 through subsequent local lockdowns and outbreaks. Thankfully we now have around only 20 cases across our homes and retirement living schemes, with 13 homes still impacted as emerging from Public Health embargo status.

To date we have tragically lost 439 residents and 3 staff – each one mourned as part of an MHA family and community as well as by their own families and friends. We are holding a day of remembrance for them on Friday 4 September, with two minutes silence across the whole of MHA at 11am.

We very much now find ourselves with our feet in two camps: one still managing and monitoring Covid-19 in our homes and schemes; the other taking forward our recovery plan to rebuild occupancy and reduce our costs in line with our reduced income (through loss of 10% of our occupancy) These cuts sadly include staffing reductions and efficiencies, which feels hard when our colleagues have already been through so much and given their all during the crisis – but we have to ensure the future sustainability of MHA.

In terms of the way forward we're also facing hiccups on our journey, with weekly routine testing currently suspended in two thirds of our homes due to lack of testing capacity, which raises the risk once more of pre or asymptomatic staff and residents spreading the virus. We're also continuing to work with the Government Taskforce on preparations for a second wave and the long needed reform of the sector.

All that said, colleagues are still working their socks off and doing all they can to bring a sense of normality back to our homes and schemes, including socially distanced garden visits for residents and their relatives, many of whom have not been able to see each other for over four months. There remains a really strong sense of us pulling together – I am privileged to work with some amazing people.

So please continue to hold us all in your prayers, residents, members and colleagues, that we will have the resilience, kindness, patience, grace and fun we need for this next phase of our journey and that we will get the support we need to keep us as safe as we can be."

Sam Monaghan

Chief Executive, MHA

If you haven't made a donation yet, or if you wish to make a further donation, you can do so in three ways.

- 1) The easiest is to go to the website, <https://www.mha.org.uk/> and click on the Donate button. Under the heading 'Billing address' there is a box where you can say which organisation you are donating on behalf of – this is where you can enter 'Wey Valley Circuit'. This way of donating makes it easy to ensure that Gift Aid is claimed.
- 2) Donate via bank transfer:
Sort code 20 05 85
Account number 10053139
- 3) Send a cheque made payable to MHA and post to MHA, Epworth House, Stuart Street, Derby, DE1 2EQ



West Horsley

The stewards' team has been meeting to go through all the guidelines and risk assessments to see if we can do everything required in order to reopen the chapel for worship in September. We've ticked most of the boxes and will put a proposal to church council later this month. Celia came back from the Missions Group meeting enthused with suggestions for making changes when we do return and we are planning to install online equipment so that we can download and project service material.

Our members are taking advantage of the Zoom services from Guildford, St Mary's, other online services and broadcast services. But it's not quite the same as being in our own chapel!

Meanwhile, we are maintaining contact weekly with all our members with a news sheet and Asif's reflections. We also send out the service information and the Super's pastoral letter, that Sue is distributing from the Circuit office. We only have a few people who don't have access to email and they are visited by our volunteer cyclists. Our continued thanks to Sue for sending out all the information for worship and for keeping us up to date with all the guidance and requirements.

We have started a new project this month - 'chatting chairs'. Church members set up a pair of chairs outdoors in front of the chapel, inviting passers by to stop for a chat. Fortunately, we are on the road through the village which is also a walking route for many people. Limited response so far in the first week, but it is early days. At least it shows the neighbours that we are still functioning!

Being a small society, it is easy to keep in touch by phone to make sure everyone is OK. So far, we have not had any more cases of the virus, but two more members have died from unrelated causes. It has been very strange not to be able to hold funerals for them in our chapel and we are considering how to celebrate their lives when all this is over.

Margaret Faulkner

The Importance of Proof Reading

A church notice sheet was prepared in great haste and it contained the following announcement. A proof reader would have helped!

"There will be a special meeting of the Church Council next Saturday morning. We hope all members will be able to attend. It will be gin with breakfast at 7.30am".

Many thanks to Margaret Ireland, Jenny Jackson and Linda Weedon who proof read The Wey Forward for me. Occasional typos may get through, but they do a sterling job and I am very grateful.

Sue Howson

Foodbanks in Times of Great Need

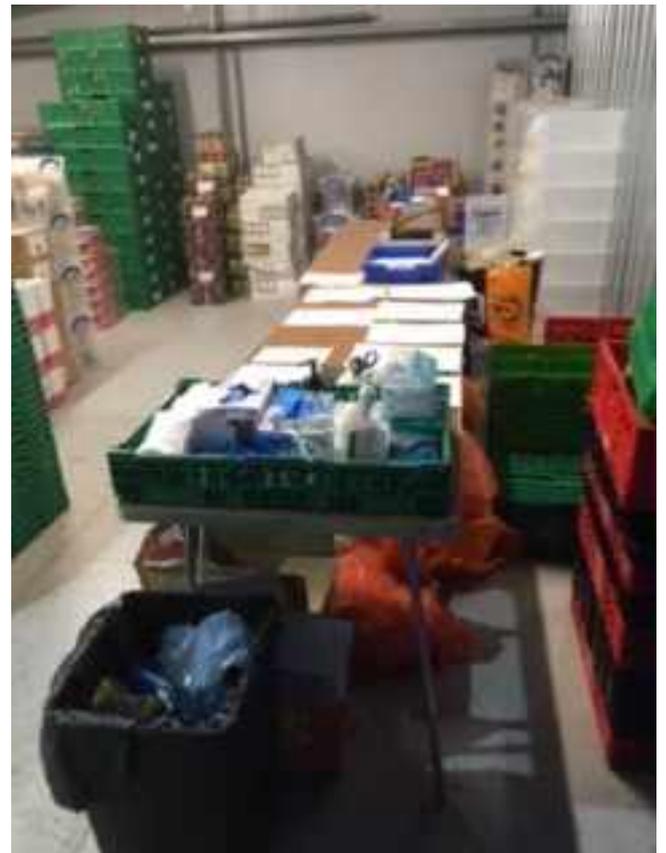


The foodbanks have been a vital part of life for many years and have become even more of a lifeline for an increasing number of people since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. Figures from the Woking Foodbank released last week record an 83% increase in demand over the same period last year.

So how has the Woking Foodbank been operating in these difficult times, supplying groceries to those in need whilst protecting the wellbeing of the volunteers?

The first thing that happened was that the drop in/collection centres closed. All operations moved to the depot in Sheerwater. Within a week of lockdown, software had been identified and installed so that volunteers could sign up for packing or delivery slots. Volunteers had to be in pairs and of course had to be from the same family. It was fortunate that so many volunteers could meet the criteria.

Volunteers man the phone everyday, including Saturday, and email the details of the requirements for the packing session to the duty volunteers. Although the previous element of choice for recipients has had to be removed, they still have an opportunity to request extras (toiletries/detergents/baby food) and of course specify vegetarian, vegan or halal.



As a general rule of thumb a one parent family with a couple of children receives approx. five carrier bags of groceries and a two parent family with four children could receive up to eleven bags. And that was before the foodbank was able to provide fruit & veg and bread in addition to the groceries.

continued.....



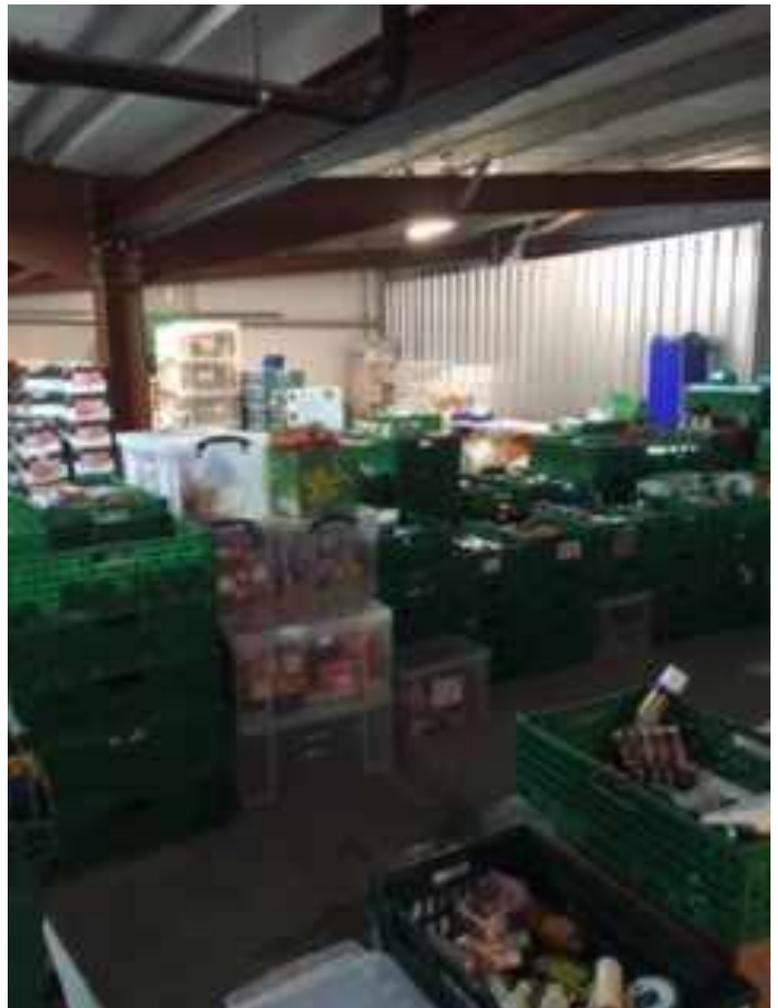
The supermarkets and other local businesses have been magnificent in their generosity and provide crates of groceries on a weekly basis. Individual donations still arrive and are welcomed. Over the Easter period donations of Easter eggs were so munificent that we were still including them with deliveries in June – luckily they have now all gone.

As the national situation with Covid-19 has eased, volunteers are now able to work in non- familial pairs, although this is still preferred for delivery purposes. There are two work benches like this situated well apart and the floor area of the warehouse is so vast that it is easy to keep a good social distance.

Once the orders have been packed, those volunteers who have been packing leave the warehouse and those on delivery duty arrive to collect the deliveries 30 minutes later; the teams don't see each other. Delivering is an interesting exercise; who knew there were so many areas of housing in Woking? Certainly not us! Thank goodness for a sat nav!!!

We must not forget the volunteer warehouse managers who spend time, usually early morning or late evening, unpacking the donations, rotating the stock so that it is used in order so that items don't go out of date, assessing shortages and negotiating for donations or notifying the packers that certain items must be substituted.

As the national situation continues with the economic hardships which are increasing we give thanks for those who donate goods or time to ensure that food reaches as many who are in need as is possible.



Linda Weedon

"Blended" Worship in Cyber Church Seminar

Park United Reformed Church, Reading are hosting a "Blended" Worship in Cyber Church Seminar. The idea is to share knowledge of and experience in facing the challenges of interactive and simultaneous "hybrid" forms of worship in physical buildings and online. During the lockdown, church leaders developed creative worship ideas to connect with their congregation. An earlier seminar (May 2020) was timely in preparation for leading worship in cyber church. A useful resource is now available: <https://elts.org.uk/wcc/.11>(<https://elts.org.uk/wcc/>)

In view of the gradual release of lockdown, Dr Phebe Mann and Dr David Wong have identified the necessity for hybrid forms of worship - blended worship in church buildings maintaining social distancing, online participation and interaction amongst all worshippers in the congregation, simultaneously or otherwise. This participatory seminar aims to provide an opportunity for participants to share their experience of facing the challenges of hybrid forms of worship.

There are two dates being offered:

29 August 2020 10:00am-12:00pm and

5 September 2020 2:00pm-4:00pm

and you need to register at:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/blended-worship-in-cyber-church-seminar-29-aug-2020-or-5-sep-2020-registration-114674530608>

Go to the above link then "Select A Date" and complete the checkout.

Joining instructions will be sent out to registered participants nearer the day.

We also have an optional task for us to try out before the seminar. We can share our experience at the seminar.

Invited guests:

Mr Roger Clark, Park United Reformed Church, Reading.

Rev Dr John McNeil Scott

Scottish United Reformed and Congregational College, Glasgow.

An Appeal for Support for Methodist Organisations which Help the Most Vulnerable

Since the Coronavirus started spreading round the UK in February, we have heard of the extreme difficulties faced by MHA staff, who have been doing their best to care for some of the most vulnerable members of our society. Their struggle continues, with escalating costs and cancellation of fundraising events adding to the health concerns. There are many other Methodist charities which are facing similar difficulties and I would like to make a plea that members of our Circuit Churches, and anyone else reading this, would consider making a donation to one of the causes mentioned in this article.

The director of the Whitechapel Mission, Tony Miller, and his staff have been facing great difficulties sustaining their support for the homeless in the East End of London. Action for Children (formerly NCH) has needed to sustain support for very vulnerable children and families. All We Can (formerly the Methodist Relief and Development Fund) has launched an Emergency Coronavirus Appeal, as the brave souls who run its programmes now battle the additional threat posed by the pandemic, particularly to refugees and migrants and to people who are so poor that they have next to no access to hand washing facilities or health care.

My particular concern, since I am Circuit Treasurer for the fund, is the Methodist Church Fund for World Mission, and for its sister organisation, the Mission in Britain Fund. These two funds usually receive regular donations from individuals and fundraising events in our Circuit Churches throughout the financial year to support many projects at home and overseas. For example, I would normally receive around £1,000 into the Circuit account after Easter, from the Easter Offering collections. Not surprisingly, there were no collections this year, but the projects this money would go to support are still in need of funding. The Circuit account is not empty – I will have money to transfer for use because a number of individuals and some Churches which have been able to have generously maintained their giving. However, the income from this Circuit is likely to be down by some 70%, so if that were to be replicated across the country and across all these funds, it would be a catastrophic loss.

I am well aware of the financial difficulties Circuit Churches are facing – I am treasurer at Knaphill. I am not appealing for Church action. I am appealing for **individuals** to make donations, to one or more of the funds mentioned. Not everyone is in a position to respond, but I believe there are many within our Circuit who can afford to give financial support (and may already have done so).

All of the funds have websites, on which direct donation is possible or information is given for alternative methods. I list the web addresses below. They all have clear information on how to donate on the home page, except for the last. On that site, it is necessary to search for “World Mission Fund” or “Mission in Britain”. Alternatively, please contact me via the information in the Circuit Directory.

Action for Children: www.actionforchildren.org.uk

All We Can: www.allwecan.org.uk

MHA: www.mha.org.uk

Whitechapel Mission: www.whitechapel.org.uk

Methodist Missions: www.methodist.org.uk

Lynda Shore

Woking's ROC Conversation

The tall towers of Woking are nearing completion. Soon many hundreds of new people will move into the town centre. Trinity will literally be within the shadow of where they live. Our Foundry project has been set up to help us engage with these people. The project is funded by Trinity, the Circuit and the District. Since January I have been employed as the project's Community Development Missioner.

A significant task to date has been organising a ROC Conversation. Working ecumenically, this was held at Trinity - virtually on the eve of lockdown. We still managed 185 attendees – representatives of local faith groups, charities, health, education, emergency services, the council and various statutory bodies. The event celebrated what is already going on, but more significantly identified community concerns that are not being addressed. Despite the context of COVID, the event went well with lots of participation, enabling a comprehensive report to be produced.

The normal pattern is to have a follow-up meeting several weeks after the Conversation. Interested parties form Action Groups to address the issues raised. Due to Covid-19, we delayed our meeting for 10 weeks – and still had to meet via Zoom! Thankfully, we were able to sort the 50 or so attendees according to their interests, ending up with four action groups. I list each below with a thumbnail of what they are doing:

Youth. Looking at centres of excellence in other towns where a range of youth focussed services are provided from one centre. Possibility of re-opening one of the closed youth centres to do this in Woking. Updating a 2017/18 local youth survey.

Mental Health & Wellbeing. Strengthening provision of some local courses. Looking at ways of listening to people who are struggling post-Covid-19. Working with Woking Mind, looking to provide activities, buddying & mentoring. Trying to provide clearer information – visual rather than words.

Social Isolation & Loneliness. Researching methods to contact isolated people who are not on anyone's radar. Phone be-friending for those remaining Covid-19 isolated because clubs, day-care etc. can't yet re-start. Learning from the Mutual Aid Groups that sprang up in response to Covid-19 how to manage the more casual* type of volunteer.

Communications. PR for all that ROC Woking is doing. Looking to develop an information platform that is maintenance light but serves the needs of the people using it.

Representatives of the council, health agencies, key charities and other 'experts' are well represented in the groups - the ROC Woking umbrella is proving to be useful in getting people to work together.

continued.....

The above is ROC Woking, not Trinity's Foundry Project – the two are not synonymous. I am often asked how ROC relates to the Foundry. My answer is that through ROC we're making important contacts. We will work with these to promote a culture of volunteering in Woking. The aim is to make casual* volunteering easier. Through the Foundry we will organise community activities, typically run-out of Trinity. These will be organised and staffed by a mixture of church and non-church volunteers - one foot in the church, another in the world. This will be where we engage with the wider community, where we foster meaningful relations. This is where, in due time, we will be able to share the good news of Jesus. Our prayer is that this will be the basis for future growth.

In terms of where we are at, the focus needs to remain on ROC Woking for a little while yet. However we are starting to think seriously about activities that we can introduce as Foundry. These are likely to focus around the isolated and lonely, but another strand will be with families. In all these cases we can only plan at the moment – all rely on being able to bring people together, and as we all know this is something of a challenge at the moment!

** Casual Volunteer. Someone who is willing, but finds it difficult to commit to a regular pattern of volunteering - we need to work around their diary rather than expecting them to work around ours. Communicates via social media 24/7 and is comfortable volunteering via an app! I'd suggest moderately young, but leave you to speculate what young is!*

Hugh Bowerman

*Community Development Missioner, The Foundry Project,
Trinity Methodist Church, Woking*

A Methodist Way of Life

The calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission.

As far as we are able, with God's help:

Worship

- We will pray daily.
- We will worship with others regularly.
- We will look and listen for God in Scripture, and the world.

Learning and Caring

- We will care for ourselves and those around us.
- We will learn more about our faith.
- We will practise hospitality and generosity.

Service

- We will help people in our communities and beyond.
- We will care for creation and all God's gifts.
- We will challenge injustice.

Evangelism

- We will speak of the love of God.
- We will live in a way that draws others to Jesus.
- We will share our faith with others.

**May we be a blessing within and beyond God's Church,
for the transformation of the world.**

A Methodist Way of Life

A Methodist Way of Life encourages us to grow together.
Make time to discuss these questions regularly with others.

Worship

- What is the pattern of your prayer life?
- How easy or hard do you find it to pray?
- What has spoken to you recently in worship or in the Bible?
- When, lately, have you felt close to God or distant from God?

Learning and Caring

- How have you practised generosity since we last met?
- How have you shown hospitality to others recently?
- How are you caring for yourself?
- How and what are you learning now?

Service

- How are you seeking to serve others in your communities and beyond? What has helped or hindered you in your service of others?
- How are you caring for God's creation?
- How are you using God's gifts (including your financial resources)?
- What issues of injustice are you currently concerned about? What are you doing in response?

Evangelism

- When was the last time you were able to talk about God?
- What opportunities to share your faith have there been since we last met?
- How have you responded to opportunities to share your faith?
- Is there anyone you might invite to consider Christian faith?

How can we support each other in our Way of Life commitments?

A Note to Contributors

It is our practice to publish each edition of The Wey Forward, in its pdf format, on the Circuit website. The Wey Forward is an important source of information about the life of the Circuit and what is going on in each of the churches across it. We want to share it with others.

However, we recognise that some contributors may be uncomfortable with a mention on the internet. We will be happy to omit names and any other personal details in any future issue if requested to do so. Please advise at the time of submitting the copy.

A Message from the Editor

I hope you have found the latest edition of 'The Wey Forward' both interesting and useful. Thank-you to everyone who contributed to the articles. As always, it has been a real pleasure to receive and read each item as I put the newsletter together.

If you would find a large print version of the magazine useful then please let me know and I can arrange that for you.

We would like the focus of the magazine to be a forward looking one. So as you plan your events, bear in mind that the rest of the circuit would love to know about them.

**The deadline for Issue 18 of The Wey Forward
is midnight 4 October 2020**

Submissions to the newsletter are accepted at any time but we can only guarantee a submission **will be considered** for a particular issue if it is received by the corresponding deadline listed below. Pop them in your diaries now.

Issue 19 18 January 2021

Issue 20 6 April 2021

Issue 21 6 July 2021

Issue 22 27 September 2021

**Please send your items (and photos) to
weyforward@weyvalleycircuit.org.uk**

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sue Howson

Diary Dates

Date	Time	Event	Venue
September 2020 (and beyond)			
2 September	7.30pm	Welcome Service for Rev Sam Funnell	Woking
28 November	10am - 12 noon	Annual Church Bazaar tbc	Knaphill
11-13 March	7.30pm	Walton Methodist Players "I'll Get My Man"	Walton
5 June 2021	10am - 3pm	Advanced Safeguarding Course	Woking

