

The Wey Forward

Issue 19 March - May 2021



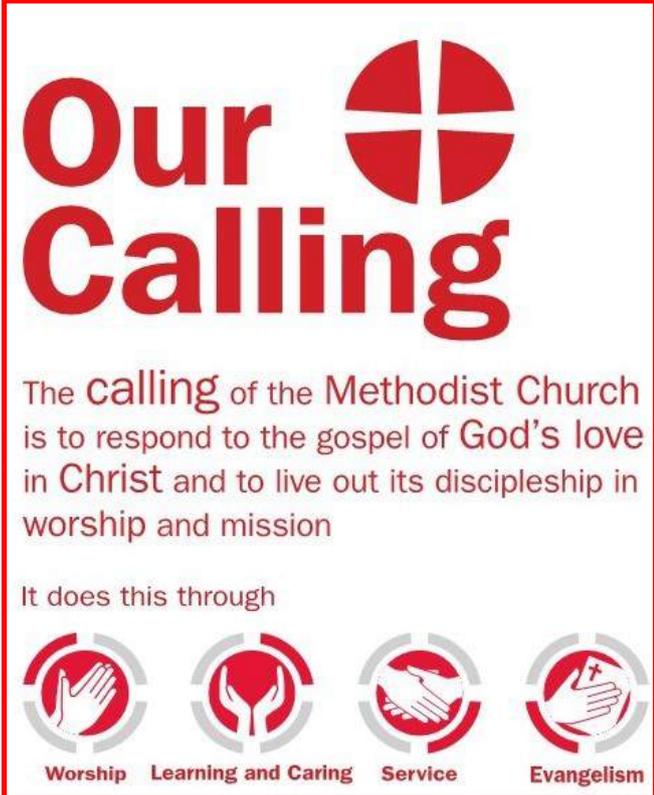
STAY HOME ▶ PROTECT THE NHS ▶ SAVE LIVES

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



Our Calling

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

It does this through

-  **Worship**
-  **Learning and Caring**
-  **Service**
-  **Evangelism**

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,

As I write, the national news is featuring the achievements of Captain Sir Tom Moore who has recently died. He was one of the last of an incredibly special generation whose resilience and cheerful spirit had stood him in good stead throughout the 100 years of life which he enjoyed. As one news presenter commented, he packed a lifetime's achievement into his last year. We recall how his sponsored walk raised £33 million for the NHS; how he made a no.1 hit recording with the song from the musical Carousel, 'You'll never walk alone'; and how he was knighted by Her Majesty the Queen. How sad that he was admitted to hospital with pneumonia only to catch COVID-19.

In reflecting on Captain Sir Tom's legacy, I realised that so often we think of the constraints and limitations on what we can endeavour, but sometimes the biggest limiting factor is in our mind. Who would have believed that an old gentleman who relied on a walking frame could possibly achieve what he did? Yet he did it with a good attitude and in a spirit of service to others. I can only use the same description that has been used so often – he is an inspiration.

On the other hand, as we are charged with the responsibility for the governance of our circuit and local churches, we cannot turn a blind eye to the challenges which are presenting themselves and which were discussed at a recent meeting of local church treasurers. There are churches in our circuit which are finding it difficult to appoint a treasurer. The options available in these circumstances include finding someone who can be treasurer if supported by a bookkeeper; appointing a member from another church in the circuit as treasurer; merging the church council with a neighbouring church council thereby reducing the number of church treasurers required; transferring the trusteeship to the circuit; or in the last resort closing the church.

There are also churches in our circuit which have been very dependent on rental income which has plummeted since March 2020. Appreciation was expressed to the many church members who have continued to show generous support to their church throughout the pandemic. Nevertheless, the longer the situation persists the more depleted financial reserves become and the more pressing it will become to face difficult questions within the circuit in order to exercise prudence.

Despite all of this, I do find inspiration in the wonderful example of Captain Sir Tom Moore. Who knows what we can achieve with fortitude, perseverance, and faith? Who knows what creative solutions may present themselves as we balance realism and hope with a good deal of cheerful faith and dedicated service added to the mix?

As this edition of the Wey Forward is published, many aspects of the way forward remain unclear. There is wonderful news concerning the development and administration of vaccines but also worrying news about new forms of the virus which is especially affecting Woking. The words of Minnie Haskins which inspired Captain Sir Tom's generation may serve to inspire us once again: "Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown." And he replied, "Go out into the darkness, and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light, and safer than a known way."

God bless you,

Keith

*Rev Keith C. Beckingham,
Superintendent Minister.*



Services Around the Circuit

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

Please double check arrangements directly with your church

Addlestone	Addlestone is now holding 10.30am Sunday services via Zoom jointly with Weybridge. We send hard copies of the Worship At Home sheets, prayer guidance and Pastoral letters to our non-internet users. There is also a regular 'Time for Prayer' Zoom meeting. For date and time contact Fred Rowe at amenquiries2@gmail.com , also for the link and password for services and meetings. The Church closed for Services and Private Prayer until further notice.
Byfleet	The Rev David Faulkner produces a weekly video Reflection which is published at 8:00 a.m. on Sunday and can be found at https://bit.ly/DFYTChannel The Superintendent's pastoral letter and other worship material received via the Circuit Office is emailed to all the church family where possible, otherwise hard copies are hand delivered. Byfleet has suspended public worship.
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. Re-opening delayed.
Godalming	Live Sunday services have been suspended for at least January. Services will be streamed at 10.30am and can be viewed at https://guc.online.church Services are available for viewing later on our web-site www.guc.org.uk . Or YouTube channel bit.ly/GUCYouTube . Viewing figures have been very positive and include people watching from across the country.
Guildford	Services each Sunday – a physical presence in church with participation by 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. Posted in hindsight on the Circuit website but you can find the video on Dave's YouTube channel at https://bit.ly/DFYTChannel Hit 'Subscribe' and then the bell icon next to it, so that you receive instant notifications when a new video is published. Knaphill has suspended gathered services.
Merrow	No immediate plans to run "remote" services. We are encouraging members with internet access to join with other churches in the circuit. 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. Silent Prayer on Wednesdays from 10.00am - 11.00am. Gathered Sunday worship has been suspended.
Sheerwater	Zoom services publicised 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. Stoughton has suspended gathered services.
Walton	Services from 3 January 2021 will be live streamed or Zoomed only. Walton hold a weekly Sunday Tea and Fellowship Zoom meeting at 4pm for their congregation to come together. Open for private prayer each Thursday for 1 hour between 2.00pm and 3.00pm. All are welcome. Details of Messy Church to follow.
West Horsley	Gathered services have been suspended.
Weybridge	10.30am Zoom service each Sunday. Contact Weybridgemethodistoffice@gmail.com for link and password.
Woking	Trinity have suspended gathered services. All services now via Zoom, Zoom details are available from Dan trinitywoking@btinternet.com or Rev Sam Funnell. Foundry Worship (at 5pm) is on alternate Sundays via Zoom. For Foundry Worship please check with Hugh Bowerman (hugh.bowerman@gmail.com) There is a Junior Church Zoom Sunday service (11.15am) each week. Friday Fun Club has also resumed, in term time, at 6.30pm via Zoom and there is a half term holiday club. Trinity has restarted Bible Investigators on Sundays at 3pm, via Zoom.

News from around the Circuit

Addlestone

Our Mission

Our efforts to help the local community are restricted mainly by the small number of active members, but I do feel we are doing our best in the circumstances. Potential new members in today's society attending our church services have expectations which, if not met, will mean they will not return. To my mind this is an aspect we must address and certainly our mission thoughts are concentrated in that direction.

My daughter and granddaughter, both long time lapsed Methodist church goers have attended a couple of our informal type evening Cafe Style services. If this encouraged them to want to go to church more regularly it is sad for me to say I would suggest they went to the nearby Baptist church. Having been to a few of their services they clearly meet our own objective, having found **'new ways of presenting Jesus Christ to today's society,'** The size and age range of their congregation proves that congregations diminishing is by no means solely due to society having too many alternative ways to spend their Sundays.

Worship the Lord with gladness, come before him with joyful song.

I will sing of your love and justice, to you Lord, I will sing praise.

Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvellous things.

Shout for joy to the Lord, All the earth, burst into jubilant song and music.

Lines taken from Psalms 100 and other Psalms on the page

After one of our evening services my daughter asked my granddaughter what in the service did she enjoy most? She said the hymn singing especially when they were well known joyful songs.

I know there is more than joyful song to our church services, but how often in a service do we praise the Lord in joyful song?

Zoom services have taught us that with YouTube hymn presentations provided at church with a projector and screen can help our singing particularly when you have no choir or even a lead singer. We have the offer of the loan of a projector and screen that will help us determine exactly our needs before we need to consider the financial side of having equipment of our own.

That is something we can do, but it is only a part of the overall service presentation, this being the responsibility of the preacher and is not in our control. I believe our preachers are taught to put content before presentation. The message should not change but the way it is presented must meet the needs of society

'God will make a way when there seems to be no way.' We know God can but when will we let him know how much we really want it and help him make it happen?

Sadly Addlestone, and I believe a few other churches are unable to survive without radical change much longer.

Some progress, but we can only pray that we can find the answers that can make it fully effective.

Fred Rowe

Byfleet

It is hard to believe that last time any of us wrote we were waiting for Advent and then Christmas; now we are talking about Lent, Holy Week and Easter. I heard snippets from an item on Radio 4 this week which alleged that as we grow older time really does seem to go faster. That's certainly the message that goes around at Byfleet where we are largely an elderly congregation. But how is it for those younger people, perhaps locked down in a small flat with no garden, having to work from home, and school their children? Does the day drag as he/she juggles so many demands It's hard!

Let's count our blessings! Being older means that the majority at Byfleet have now had at least their first vaccination, whether in Guildford, Woking, Chertsey, Staines, Walton, or Epsom. What's more the village community charitable service, *Byfleet Care*, will cheerfully help with transport where needed. And for those facing financial hardship, we are still able to operate the Foodbank outlet from the church by delivering parcels to people's homes. Sadly the hospitality for which we were well noted in the village, which was part and parcel of our opening hours' service pre-lockdown, has had to be suspended. But



..... as I write, the 'R' factor has fallen to well below 1, the number of confirmed new cases in the past 24 hours reduced and deaths over a similar period have fallen so is it safe to be optimistic?

It's perhaps a little bit early to be certain, but hopefully by the time you read this we will have announced with great pleasure that Byfleet Methodist Church is open once more – so come and join us in celebration as Rev Keith Beckingham leads our gathered worship on **Sunday 7 March** as we mark our Church Anniversary with a Service of Holy Communion.

With greetings and good wishes to you all from Byfleet Methodist Church.

Margaret Watts

Funny Ha Ha

When do monkeys fall from the sky?

During Ape-ril showers!

What do you get when you pour hot water down a rabbit hole?

A hot cross bunny



Cranleigh

For most people the COVID epidemic is still at the forefront of our minds and it certainly determines a great many of our actions: should we who are elderly and/or frail go to the supermarket to shop for our groceries? Are we allowed to stop and chat with people we see in the High Street? As church pastoral visitors, are we allowed to enter people's homes? Do you remember Christmas? My son and his two daughters were allowed to visit me on Christmas Day (from Horsham) but my daughter and her family (from Guildford) weren't. Just as well, as that would have been too many people eating dinner in my dining room, sitting too close together! We wouldn't be human if those of us who live on our own didn't get a little tired of all these restrictions.

However, what wonderful kindness has been shown by our neighbours and even by those we scarcely know. Food Banks have been staffed and plentiful stocks of food donated for the needy, especially those who have children and who have lost their jobs. A Baby Bank has been started at our church and has already helped many families with clothing and equipment including refugee families. I am told that quite a lot of clothing was donated to our refugee friends from Syria, whom we haven't been able to visit at home or entertain weekly as we used to in our church on Tuesday afternoons before lockdown last March, eleven months ago.

I have felt very sorry for those whose job it has been to decide about the level of restrictions to be enforced, whether children should be allowed back to school (my grandson was supposed to be doing GCSE's this summer!), which sports should be allowed, what journeys you could undertake and so on. Once more, however, technology has been at the forefront of children's home-schooling. Even those without computers or lap-tops have been given them thanks to those who had spares. Lessons have proceeded remotely, particularly for exam classes, and most pupils are following them conscientiously.

Now, of course, the most important thing to have happened is the distribution of the vaccine to firstly the most elderly and infirm, and I thought this was organised in a tremendously successful way. We should be immensely grateful first of all to the scientists who produced these different vaccines and also to the doctors and nurses on the front line who worked so hard to deliver them. We can at last see the dreadful number of deaths decreasing. However much we have disliked the restrictions we have had to observe, how much worse to have lost close relatives or friends to this all-powerful disease.

I think that in general the best characteristics of the human race, those inspired by our Creator, are the ones which have been most manifest in our response to this terrible scourge which has afflicted so many: scientists, doctors, nurses, care workers, helpers at home, parents, teachers – all have worked to help others through this crisis unselfishly, unconcerned for their own welfare. Many sadly have sacrificed their own lives. Let us never forget.

Glenda Sewell

Circuit Books of Faith Group

If interested please contact:

Rev J. Allan Taylor on 01483 200464



Reverend Norman Edsall

7 July 1935 - 15 January 2021

A reflection from Godalming United Church

We said our farewells to Norman on Friday 12 February at his funeral held in Godalming United Church but under COVID-19 requirements. Only 30 family mourners could attend the service led by Rev Adam Payne but we were able to relay the service live so that his many, many friends could join in the celebration of Norman's full and gracious life. It was a service of love and joy for the life of a kind and humble man who had influenced the lives of so many. Throughout the service three important strands in Norman's life were evident, his faith and ministry, his family and his service in the Royal Air Force. Items laid on his coffin represented these strands in his life - his long, white preaching stole, flowers and his Cyprus service medal.



Not all in the Circuit will have known Norman but for over 20 years of active and supernumerary ministry he was a major part of the church in Godalming. Norman was born in Dorset, went to Wimborne Grammar School and was brought up in a loving, Christian family. After a number of jobs he was called up for National Service in the RAF and served for 10 years, much of which time was spent in Cyprus, with promotion to the rank of Sergeant. This service in the RAF brought him into contact with all sorts of people to whom he gave support and people, himself included, who were inquisitive about faith. The seeds were sown for Norman's ministry and on leaving the Services (but not entirely as in later life he played a full role as a padre at the Stoughton Barracks) he trained at New College and was ordained as a Congregational minister at Burgess Hill. In due course he moved to Surrey with key ministries at Elstead and Godalming.

Throughout his years he proudly insisted that he was a Congregational minister but his life was truly ecumenical, oscillating between Congregationalism and Methodism and marrying an Anglican, his beloved wife Maureen, a long and happy marriage celebrating their Golden Wedding Anniversary in 2019. Norman also celebrated 50 years of his ordination, an active ministry throughout which ended with his playing a major part in the appointment of Rev Adam Payne to Godalming United Church.

continued.....

In his address at the funeral Rev Paul Hulme took as his theme the words from Micah, "What does the Lord require of you", words fully met and answered by Norman in his life and ministry. Paul met Norman nine years ago on his appointment at GUC, He spoke about how great it was getting to know Norman and his family, how it was a shared ministry of enrichment, a very active ministry with Norman part of the ministerial team, although retired. Paul loved Norman dearly, not just as a minister but as a friend welcoming Paul to his house with an impish sense of fun, encouraging him and supporting him. Norman was a man who stood for justice, was kind, genuine and humble, a minister for the minister and proud to have been called to be a minister.

Other ministers have written with their memories of Norman's ministry. Rev Keith Beckingham described him as a gifted and dedicated minister who had a great love of GUC and who was greatly loved and respected by many people, a real servant and leader of the Church who will be greatly missed. Rev John Goatley - the third of the Three Musketeers at Godalming: Paul, Norman and John - remembers Norman as a gracious man, very welcoming, a good preacher who he was glad to have known and who had fought the good fight.

Family was so important to Norman and memories from his son Mark and from a family friend emphasised the strong bond between Norman, his family and grandchildren. Family gatherings were enjoyed throughout his life, gatherings of much happiness, humour and lifelong memories. Likewise holidays, often to Norman's annoyance getting lost in France. A love of railways developed in his youth meant epic train journeys in Canada, Scotland and elsewhere, exciting times. In Elstead he loved his garden and he played a full part in village life.

Some final words. Norman's funeral service concluded with the Royal Air Force regimental march. Norman has now fallen asleep in the peace of Christ. We entrust him with faith and hope in everlasting life, to the love and mercy of our Father and surround him with our love and prayers. Amen.

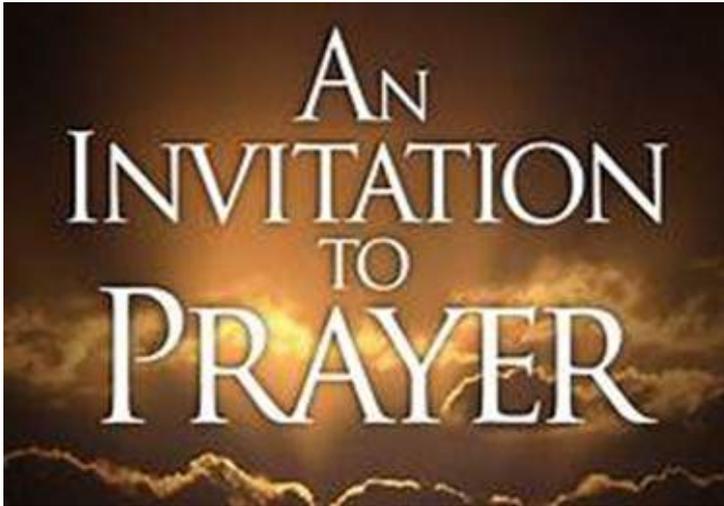
We will always deeply love and cherish our beloved Norman's memory, He will live in our hearts forever. Maureen.

Godalming United Church



Circuit Prayer Vigil

8.00am Saturday 6 March until 8.00am Sunday 7 March 2021



The Mission Group is once again organising a 24 hour prayer vigil. Whilst there has always been a great need for prayer, it is undeniable that this period of our lives is calling for much more concentrated prayer for our families, our churches and the nation.

The prayer vigil will take place over the weekend of 6/7 March 2021, which follows on from the World Day of Prayer on Friday 5 March.

By the time this magazine is published you should have received a prayer 'aide memoire' from your church Mission Group representative, communications contact or senior steward plus details of the time slots your church is being asked to cover. Please contact one of these officers if you haven't received what you need, although both are on the Circuit website.

This year more than ever our prayers are needed and for the first time in many years we have no church members on board who can cover our 'wee small hours' from different time zones. Thanks in advance to those who interrupt their sleep to keep the 24 hours going.

We ask that all those who are leading worship on Sunday 7 March refer to this vigil and bring it to a conclusion in the prayers offered during morning worship.

Please put these dates in your diary.

Circuit Mission Group

Dial a Prayer



FREE phone lines for prayers, reflections and news from the Methodist Church

Listen to a prayer: 0808 281 2514

Listen to a pastoral message from the President and Vice President:
0808 281 2695

Listen to our Podcast: 0808 281 2478

Prayer updated every Thursday, Presidential message updated every Monday,
Methodist Podcast updated on first and third Thursday of the month.

Please share these numbers locally with people who are not online and may feel very isolated and in need of spiritual comfort.

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

Led by Rev Claire Hargreaves and Helen Belsham (organised by McCabe Pilgrimages)

Our pilgrimage to the Holy Land has been postponed until next year and the new dates are now **Monday 9 to Monday 16 May 2022.**

Whether you have already expressed an interest or whether you are thinking that you would like to find out more, please feel free to come to our information meeting. We plan to hold this later in the year, date to be announced.

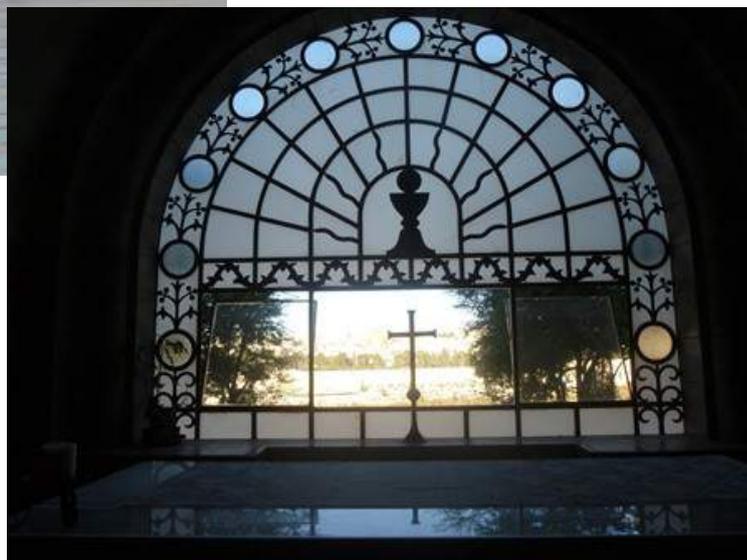
Having both been to the Holy Land we would love to give you the opportunity to experience the sites where the most important events of Jesus' life and ministry took place in Galilee, Jerusalem and surrounding areas. Whether you have been before or are new to the Holy Land, you will be moved and enriched as we journey, pray and learn together. Reading the gospels will never be the same again!

The anticipated cost is around £2,000 per person sharing an en suite room on a full-board basis (flights included). We will be staying in hotels in Tiberias and Jerusalem and will be visiting Nazareth, Galilee, Bethlehem, the Dead Sea and Jerusalem

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



Left: On the Sea of Galilee



Right: Jerusalem from Dominus Fleuit church

Helen Belsham

Godalming United Church

Our 10:30am Sunday services remain online and can be accessed at <https://guc.online.church>. Recordings (audio and video) are available through our website (www.guc.org.uk) or our YouTube channel (<https://bit.ly/GUCYouTube>) after the services. Thanks go, as ever, to Richard August – our technical guru – and his team.

Paper copies of each service are produced every week and delivered to members who do not use the internet.

We were delighted to hear that Ryan Kelley had been awarded an MBE in the Queen's New Year Honours (see separate item).

We were saddened in January to learn of the death of Rev Norman Edsall: a true friend and servant of our church. A full appreciation of his life appears on pages 8 and 9 of this magazine.

Our Lent Appeal this year is for Médecins Sans Frontières an organisation that works constantly at the forefront of medical need, including, now, COVID-19 vaccination and alleviation. www.msf.org

A regular watch is kept on the River (which links our circuit) – one of the joys of our location, but also an anxiety in times of very variable flow!

Nancy Wilks



Just turn up ... no need to book and it's free



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Mission Supper

~~Saturday 20 March 2021~~
at
Trinity Woking

**Postponed
until next year**

New date

Saturday 5 March 2022



Congratulations Ryan

In this year's Queen's New Year's Honours List, Ryan Kelley, a member of Godalming United Church, was awarded the MBE "for services for social care in Surrey". Ryan has worked for Whitmore Vale Housing Association for over 40 years during most of which time he has been its CEO. The Association was set up in 1971 when adults with a learning difficulty began to be moved out from the large "mental sub normality" hospitals into the community and began with one residential care home in Hindhead. Since then, the organisation has grown and now provides various types of accommodation throughout South West Surrey ranging from residential homes, sheltered accommodation to supporting people living independently in houses or flats, all for adults with a wide range of learning disabilities and autistic needs.

Ryan was instrumental in setting up and still remains a member of the Surrey Care Association. SCA provides support, information and training for Surrey providers of social care in all its categories. The Association also represents the views of Surrey care providers to local and national government.

Ryan is probably better known in the Circuit for, over the years, masterminding the transportation of 59 containers full of mainly educational and medical supplies to the Gambia, Sierra Leone and Ghana.

Sylvia Kelley



Guildford St Mary's

I came across a well known rhyme on social media recently that had been altered so it read -
30 days have September, April, June and November

All the rest have 31, except February alone which this year has 280 days clear

Thank goodness it's not a Leap Year!

I think the writer was speaking for many of us. Since the last edition of *The Wey Forward* the days have indeed seemed long at times, been dark and we have found ourselves in winter's icy grip. Yet there have been times that have been truly blessed. The December lockdown meant sudden last minute changes had to be made to our Carols by Candlelight service. Fewer people were able to be present in church yet whether you were there in person or connected via Zoom, everyone commented how wonderful the service was and how beautiful St Mary's looked, flooded with the new soft lighting, candles flickering and the lights from the Christmas tree shining. Truly reflecting the words from John 1 "The light shines in the darkness and the darkness can never extinguish it"

In addition we had the unexpected joy of welcoming two foreign students who had seen the lights on and asked if they could stay for the service.

St Mary's Church at Home has continued to sustain and uplift us each Sunday. We have had friends joining from many different locations near and far and it has been a joy to share worship together.

It was a very special moment when we shared the Covenant Service together, its profound words reminding us of God's presence with us at all times.

Having successfully held our series of Advent reflections online, we are looking forward to the start of our Lent reflections. This year the series is based on Hannah Steel's new book *Living His Story* and the series begins 18 February at 12.30pm and runs for six weeks. Keep an eye out for the publicity. We would love it if you were able to join us.

Chit Chat has continued successfully since it moved online and we welcome around 16 - 20 guests every Wednesday morning for an hour of conversation. One of the joys of being online is that we have been able to welcome guests who have gone back to their own countries. I was lucky enough to have a virtual tour of Hong Kong harbour a few weeks ago and have seen it snowing in China.

With the major building works completed at St Mary's, attention has turned to finishing off inside. New carpet has been laid in the meeting room, some internal decoration is planned and the old wooden choir pews have been found new homes. (I for one would love to see how these have been incorporated into people's homes!) We are looking forward to the time when we can open safely and give everyone a chance to see the changes. Street Angels are now using St Mary's as their base and they love being there. Perhaps it has something to do with the new heating!

Finally, on behalf of everyone at St Mary's we would like to wish Keith every blessing as he starts his sabbatical in March. Go with our love and prayers Keith and we look forward to hearing all about it when you return.

Rosemary Lee



The Blessing of Words...

The clever little poem below came to me via a friend of a friend of a friend but with permission to reproduce it. The poem takes us on a literary journey from W B Yeats to William Shakespeare via John Masefield, William Wordsworth, Milton Hayes, Rudyard Kipling, Harold Boulton, G K Chesterton and A E Houseman. The theme of the poem is of course entirely topical and relevant to our current situation not just in this country but throughout the world.

Lockdown

I won't arise and go now and go to Innisfree
I'll sanitise the door knob and make a cup of tea.
I won't go down to the seas again, I won't go out at all.
I'll wander lonely as a cloud from the kitchen to the hall.
There's a one eyed yellow idol to the north of Kathmandu
But I shan't be seeing him just yet, and nor, I think will you.
While the dawn comes up like thunder on the road to Mandalay
I'll make a bit of supper and eat it off a tray.
I shall not speed my bonny boat across the sea to Skye
Or take the English rolling road from Birmingham to Rye.
About the woodland, just right now I am not free to go
To see the Keep Out posters, or the Cherry hung with snow.
And no, I won't be travelling much within the realms of gold
Or get me to a nunnery.....all that's been put on hold.
Give me your hands, I mayn't request, albeit we are friends
Nor come within a mile of you, until this sad show ends.

Poetry may not be everyone's cup of tea but for some it is a source of great stimulation, imagination and comfort. May each one of us find blessing in and through literature or art or music during these strangest of days.

God bless,

Allan
(Rev J. Allan Taylor)

Butterflies

During the monthly walks organised by the Walton Methodist Church, many butterflies were seen, especially in warmer sunny weather. In the second of a short series Colin Wright details some that were seen, omitting the Large White, Small White, Green-veined White and Small Tortoiseshell, scarce in Surrey in recent years, and the Painted Lady, which although once a frequently seen migrant, wasn't seen at all.

These insects emphasise the amazing diversity of God's creation, which need a healthy habitat to pass on their beauty to future generations. Reference: "Butterflies of Surrey Revisited", by Ken Willmott and members of Butterfly Conservation Surrey Branch.

Peacock These have been a beautiful sight throughout Surrey, but the newly arrived parasite, the tachinid, has reduced their numbers. They can be seen for much of the year as the adults hibernate. Females lay several hundred eggs on nettles or occasionally on hops, with adults emerging in July. In a warm summer there can be a second brood with adults emerging in September. Their interesting defence is the hissing noise they can make when alarmed by rubbing their forewings together!



Purple Hairstreak These overwinter as an egg, with the caterpillars emerging in April to feed on oak leaves. The adults fly from June to August being quite common in places like Ashtead Common where we saw one in June 2018. Although common in places like Bookham Commons and Richmond Park they are often not easily seen as they spend time in the oak canopy.



Red Admiral This distinctive butterfly can be seen from March to November, being a combination of hibernators, migrants and native emergents, with numbers peaking in July and August. Eggs are laid singly on nettle leaves and take about 50 days to develop from a caterpillar to adults. We saw Red Admirals on several of our walks, including those in Bookham Commons. More spectacular, in September 2018 we passed a number gathered in a tree by Papercourt Lake, Ripley.

White Admiral These are found in woodland areas with honeysuckle as foodplant for the caterpillars and bramble where adults gather nectar. They fly from June to August, seeing them on several occasions in Bookham Commons. Butterflies are counted regularly along transects in Surrey, White Admirals, for example, are counted regularly in transects on Epsom and Ashtead Commons. Noting the number of each species every year helps to assess the health of the natural environment



continued.....



Silver-washed Fritillary This large colourful butterfly was very rare in Surrey in the 1970s but in recent years has been expanding its distribution and abundance. It flies from June to August, the female finding oak trees with violets growing nearby. It has an interesting lifecycle with eggs often deposited in cracks in old gnarled oak trunks. They hatch after about 14 days, eat the eggshell, go into hibernation until the following spring, then eat the violets, to later emerge as strong beautiful butterflies. We saw many on our visits to Bookham Commons.

Small Copper These fly from April through to October in most parts of Surrey but rarely in large numbers. Their habitat includes grassland, woodland rides and heathland, wherever sorrel (or dock) grows for the caterpillars to eat. Adults live for only about 25 days, but the species are seen over many months as there can be up to three or four broods a year. We have seen them in Bookham Commons and they can also be seen in Richmond Park and Headley Heath.



Speckled Wood We have seen these butterflies on many of our walks. They have a long flying season from the end of March to November, the caterpillars feeding on a variety of grasses. A mystery is why this butterfly was so rare in the south-east around 1900, being limited to parts of West Sussex. It can overwinter either as a larva or pupa, leading to overlapping broods. Adults feed on aphid honeydew and plant nectar.

Colin Wright

If you have enjoyed reading about these beautiful insects and want to find out more the charity Butterfly Conservation is a good place to start. They aim to recover threatened butterfly and moth populations, increase numbers of widespread species, inspire people to understand and deliver species conservation and promote international conservation actions.

Details can be found at <https://butterfly-conservation.org/>

Circuit Day Outing to Oxford

Saturday 4 September 2021

ADVANCE NOTICE

SUBJECT TO COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS BEING RELAXED BY SEPTEMBER, I am planning a circuit day outing to **OXFORD** on **SATURDAY 4 SEPTEMBER**. This will be an opportunity to visit some of the historical locations associated with John and Charles Wesley, who were both undergraduates at Christ Church, with John later becoming a Fellow of Lincoln College.

In 1725 a small group of students (which became known as THE HOLY CLUB) began meeting in Oxford to pray, study and express their faith through compassionate social outreach. Led by the Wesley brothers this was the beginning of a movement which would evolve into the Methodist Church with over 80 million members worldwide today.

Travel will be by luxury coach with on-board toilet and complimentary hot drinks.

Pick-ups in Cranleigh, Godalming, Guildford, Merrow, Woking and Walton-on-Thames.

£27.50 per person payable on the coach on the day.

NOTHING TO PAY NOW

To register your interest please contact me

5 Fortune Drive Cranleigh GU6 8DH
Tel 01483 276075 Email strawsons@hotmail.com

James Strawson

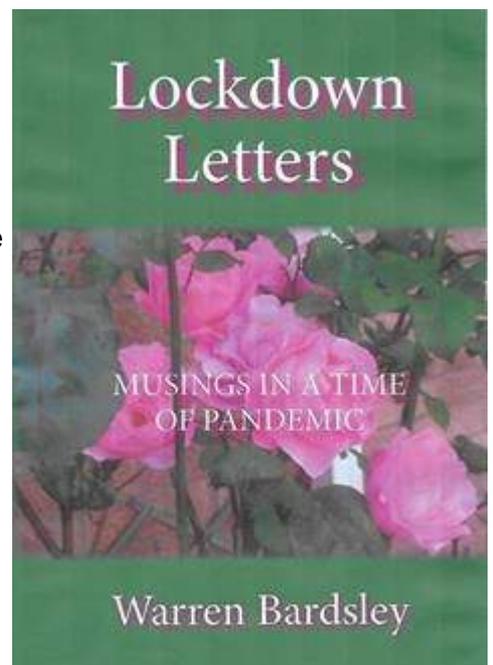


"Lockdown Letters" were originally written as weekly pieces, sent to friends and acquaintances during the first five months of the national lockdown, following the spread of the global COVID-19 virus in March 2020. Personal reflections on the positive and negative effects of the lockdown, the letters are a kind of commentary on this strange time which has the potential to change our lives, society and the world, for years to come. Price £6.50.

Profits from sales of 'Lockdown Letters' will be equally divided between Medical Aid for Palestinians and The Fund for Human Need, a small, effective Methodist charity.

Copies can be obtained from Warren at w.bardsley39@btinternet.com or 01543 255292.

This is a limited print run. There will be a small discount on orders of five copies or more.



Bookshelf



Another selection of general interest books which are often available from Amazon, or major retailers (e.g. WH Smith, Tesco's), at a significant discount.

The truths we hold – an American Journey

Kamala Harris, Penguin Random House/Vintage, 2021, pbk 320pp, £9.99. The new Vice-President of the United States of America describes the big challenges we face together with the vision of a shared purpose and shared values. “Personal integrity shines through every page” *The Observer*.

Entertaining Saints – Tales from St George’s Crypt

Roger Quick, 2020, pbk 160pp, £7.69 Darton Longman & Todd www.dltbooks.com. St George’s Crypt, founded in 1930, is a charity for homeless and vulnerable people in Leeds. Written by the Crypt’s chaplain, the book demonstrates the saving work of Christ in action and is full of humanity in its truest form. “At the end of the day we are all just walking each other home” from the *Foreword* by Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York.

One giant leap – man’s epic journey to the moon – 50th anniversary edition

Rod Pyle, Sevenoaks, 2019, 175pp, £8.00 from WH Smith while stocks last (a reduction of 65%). *Foreword* by Gene Kranz, former NASA Flight Director. Readers of a certain age will remember watching the flickering black and white TV images of Neil Armstrong as he landed on the moon on 20 July 1969 with the words “One small step for a man. One giant leap for mankind”. Includes over 150 stunning photographs of this historic mission.

The Librarian of Auschwitz

Antonio Iturbe (translated by Lilit Zekulin Thwaites), Ebury Press, 2019 (originally published in 2012), 423pp, £8.99 “It wasn’t an extensive library. In fact it consisted of eight books – but they were books. In this incredibly dark place they were a reminder of less sombre times”.

Railway Preservation Pioneers

Key Publishing, 2014, 132pp, £2.99 inc p&p (a reduction of £4.00) from keypublishing.com [Key Publishing Ltd, PO Box 300, Stamford PE9 1NA Tel 01780 480404.] A fascinating account of the early days of railway preservation including chapters on the Festiniog Railway, the Dart Valley Railway and the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway – the location for *The Railway Children*. [Here the compiler of **Bookshelf** admits to a nostalgic interest which he suspects is shared by some other readers of *The Wey Forward*!]

James Strawson

Cranleigh Methodist Church strawsons@hotmail.com



Supporting Charities

Last year I wrote a short article for the Wey Forward appealing for members around the Circuit to donate to various Methodist charities, to support them during the Covid-19 crisis. I make no apology for repeating that appeal, as we enter the second year of crisis.

I am well aware that each of our Circuit churches has lost a great deal of money because of the pandemic – I am, after all, treasurer at Knaphill – but I am not asking for church donations. Doubtless there will be members who have suffered financially during the past year, but there will also be folk who, because their income has remained steady but they have not been able to enjoy holidays, or theatre and restaurant trips, or other celebrations, have money available to support good causes. Clearly, many people are already doing that – there is no shortage of worthy causes. I just want to put in a particular plea for Methodist charities, because it behoves Methodists to support those, along with Christian Aid, which is a cause particularly close to my heart, hence my sponsored litter-pick last autumn.



The scale of losses for many organisations is enormous. At Knaphill, we held our usual Missions Coffee Morning in January 2020. Since then, we have been unable to hold the other fundraising events we would expect to do annually, resulting in a loss of some £1,200 for World Mission and Mission in Britain so far – from one church alone. The only monies received since then have been donations from individuals, which are valuable, but cannot make up for such losses. Christian Aid Week 2020 went ahead, via appeals through the media and online, but with no house-to-house collection and many other events impossible to stage, the income dropped from £8 million in 2019 to less than £4.5 million in 2020. There will be no house-to-house collection in 2021 either, so this looks like being repeated.

Therefore, I earnestly appeal to everyone who can to make a donation in support of one or more of the Methodist charities – MHA, Whitechapel Mission, All We Can, Action for Children, Mission in Britain, World Mission – and also please remember Christian Aid.

All of these organisations have web-sites, on which it is very easy to donate. However, if anyone wishes to support a particular cause but is not comfortable donating online, I can supply contact details for them all, or I am willing to pass on cheques. My details are in the Circuit Directory.

Many thanks.

Lynda Shore

Knaphill Methodist Church.

What can we learn about the Coronavirus crisis?

Millions of words have been written about Covid-19, no doubt with countless more to come. Here are three books which seem particularly relevant at the beginning of 2021.

The Covid-19 Catastrophe - what's gone wrong and how to stop it happening again

Richard Horton (Editor in Chief of *The Lancet*), 2nd expanded and updated edition, February 2021, Polity, £11.43; kindle edn £9.49 (Amazon). Chapters include (i) From Wuhan to the World (ii) Why Were We Not Prepared? (iii) The Politics of Covid-19 (iv) Towards the Next Pandemic.

Richard Horton (who is by background a doctor and has served in various roles with the World Health Organisation) scrutinises the actions taken by governments across the world as they sought to contain the novel coronavirus. He shows that indecisions and disregard for scientific evidence have led many political leaders to preside over hundreds of thousands of needless deaths and the worst global economic crisis for three centuries.

“This is the book to read if you want to understand the response to Covid-19. Powerful, beautifully written and reflective. We need to learn the lessons of this pandemic and we need to learn them fast, because the next pandemic may arrive sooner than we think”. Devi Sridhar, Professor of Global Public Health, University of Edinburgh and a frequent television and radio commentator on Covid-19.

God and the Pandemic – A Christian Reflection on the Coronavirus and its Aftermath

Tom Wright, SPCK, 2020, £6.25 (Amazon).

What are we supposed to think about the Coronavirus crisis? Some people say “This is a sign of the End. It’s all predicted in the Book of Revelation”. Others disagree “God is judging the world and through this disease he is telling us to change”. And others say “It’s all the fault of the Chinese, or of the World Health Organisation, or of the Government”.

Tom Wright (a Senior Research Fellow at Wycliffe Hall in the University of Oxford, formerly Bishop of Durham) invites us to consider a different way of seeing and responding – a way that draws on the teaching and examples of scripture and above all on the way of living, thinking and praying revealed to us by Jesus.

“This is classic Tom Wright. Running to only 88 pages it is accessible, but also demanding for those who think they know all the answers. It leaves one satisfied at having learned and yet wanting to know more. Superbly written, utterly Bible based” Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury.

Life After Covid-19 – Lessons from past Pandemics

Bob Gordon, 2020, Bonovallum Books, £11.19 (Amazon).

This book investigates past epidemics and their aftermath starting with the Black Death in 1347, which re-emerged in London in 1665. A hundred years ago the 1918 Spanish influenza pandemic swept across the world, and more recently there have been outbreaks of SARS, MERS and Ebola. The impact in a variety of fields is considered – including the effects on education, retailing, hospitality, tourism and the airline industry.

James Strawson



When he comes

When he comes
the stars are realigned
the heavens crack open to show Angel praise choirs.

When he comes
notice is served on empires and tyrants
the broken and oppressed breathe the air of freedom.

When he comes
earth's hard winter will soften
new life will break through the frozen crust.

When he comes
the blind will see, the dumb speak,
the deaf hear, the lame leap for joy.

When he comes
death and tears and aching hearts will be no more;
no pain, no grief.

When he comes.

But when he comes
there will be no palaces of privilege,
no centres of power to flex their muscles,
no trumpets or triumphs
no newspaper headlines, gossip columns,
no Tweet
no Facebook thread going viral.

And when he comes
Shepherds, the dispossessed, the confused,
the lonely, the unwanted, the forgotten, the hidden are all
welcomed, entertained, fed, honoured, bathed in glory
invited to a manger side to kneel
and see God's new and game-changing initiative.

Advent 2020

Andrew Wheeler

∞

Rev Canon Andy Wheeler was the first leader of Common Ground Guildford (please see commongroundguildford.org whose strapline is "Pray - Together - Go"). He was previously Mission Pastor of St Saviour's Church Guildford and World Mission Adviser to the Guildford Diocese.

Common Ground is based at St Mary's Church (joint Anglican/Methodist under the auspices of a Sharing Agreement) in Guildford. Andy was also instrumental in founding the Guildford Town Centre Chaplaincy and the Guildford Street Angels.

Merrow

I finished our article for the last issue of this magazine by saying that “when you read this we will be finalising the details of our Carol Service ‘with a difference’ on the morning of Sunday 20 December.” Well we got very close to pulling this off! With bookings over subscribed for the socially distanced seating in the church we had even arranged additional safe seating in the foyer and then to everyone’s immense disappointment we were told on Thursday 17 December that Guildford was being moved into Tier 4 and we had to make the difficult decision to close yet again.

With the National Lockdown following almost immediately, we are still nowhere closer to determining when we are going to be able to reopen for gathered worship. In the meantime many of our members are joining the weekly Zoom worship being provided by Nigel and team at Guildford St Mary’s, including very thoughtful Covenant and Pastoral Visitors services in January which were very much appreciated.

Indeed Zoom is beginning to play an ever increasing role in the lives of all of us who have access to an internet service at home (although we must not forget that this is not available to everyone, particularly some of our older members). As well as providing an invaluable opportunity to keep in regular remote contact with our family and friends, it is also beginning to play a bigger role in our church fellowship. We have now run our second Zoom Charity Coffee Morning which raised over £400 for the ‘Toilet Twinning’ charity which will help to build toilets and hand washing facilities in a deprived Himalayan village in Nepal, and we are hoping to continue these on a monthly basis. On Thursday 22 April we will be supporting the Leprosy Mission and on 20 May the coffee morning will be in aid of Action For Children.



We are also hosting Zoom Lent Discussion Groups based on the “Methodist Way of Life” booklet commencing on Thursday 18 February and we have set a date for our next remote Council Meeting.

But not everything is “remote”. We are continuing to open the church for Silent Prayer every Wednesday morning from 10am - 11am and many are deriving comfort from this opportunity of peaceful reflection and prayer.

We are also intending to extend this to the afternoon of Saturday 6 March for an hour to coincide with our allocated “slot” in the Circuit Prayer Vigil.

As I write this the future certainly looks brighter with the continued successful roll out of the vaccination programme and hopefully this means that by the time the June issue comes out we should be back to a “new normal” whatever that is going to look like.

Meanwhile I was struck by a piece I read in one of the newspapers. Staff on one COVID-19 ward in Buckinghamshire have created an “inspiration wall” upon which they scribble in felt pen their hopes and prayers. One wrote: “*Life isn’t about waiting for the storm to pass, it’s about learning to dance in the rain*” and perhaps that should be the mantra for us all as we wonder what is coming next.....

Hugh Bradley

Trinity, Woking

Woking Phone Friends

I don't know about you, but I have spent a large part of the last year staring out the window.

I've been working from home on and off for a year now, and do a lot of window watching to think, or rest my eyes from the laptop. But, whether I am with my Dad or my 'bubble hubby' (my partner) I get to go for a walk every day. In the warm summer days of lockdown 1.0 it was long walks in the woods. It's now long walks around the pavements, wrapped up in lots of layers. I also do the supermarket shopping, and treat myself to a takeaway coffee.

Imagine if you can't go out, and all you can do is look out the window, watch TV, read a book, do a puzzle book. You get your shopping delivered or get Meals on Wheels. You have family who live a long way away, or you don't have any family at all. You may have a cat, or you may have no pets. Some people are happy in their own company and might find the above appealing. But if you don't, then you may be experiencing social isolation or loneliness. This might be compounded if you suffer from anxiety or depression, a physical disability, or frailty.



'Lockdown isn't over for everyone' is a tag line we used to launch ROC Woking's Phone Befriending project in the Autumn. We match volunteers with vulnerable or lonely folk who may benefit from a regular phone call. Woking Borough Council employees were making welfare calls to the elderly and vulnerable throughout the first lockdown. As they have had to transition back to other work, they have been working with us to transfer the most vulnerable of their clients to Woking Phone Friends, or other agencies like Woking Mind.

After a slow start, the project started to take off just before Christmas. We matched our first volunteers and clients, who chatted with each other over the Christmas and New Year break.

We've just held our first peer to peer review session, and the experience has been positive. We have capacity with trained volunteers to take more clients on immediately, and we'll be highlighting in the Spring issue of the Woking Magazine (a Borough publication distributed to each household) that we'll soon be open for direct or self-referrals.

If you'd like to volunteer as a Phone Friend in the next round of recruitment, we would be delighted to hear from you. We offer training and a supportive peer network. If you know someone who lives in the Borough of Woking who might benefit from a regular friendly call, then do get in touch.

Daniela Warr Schori

Foundry Centre Coordinator, Trinity Methodist Church Woking

<https://www.facebook.com/wokingphonefriends>

continued.....

Children & Family Work

The pandemic has not stopped the children and family work at Trinity, and we'd like to share with the Circuit what has been going on.

When we reviewed the children and family work recently, we realised how much the Junior Church and Connect Team have made happen over the past 10 challenging months. We have grown as a team, and families have grown with us. We have learnt that the gospel can be shared anywhere thanks to technology, Google Help, YouTube help and each other. [Connect is a group of folk set up to support the Family Worker].

Our Friday Night Fun Club continues to work well with a core group of attendees. Relevant themes have been covered including Halloween and Christmas.

We held a successful **virtual holiday club** in the October half term with 20+ attendees. These were 45-minute sessions and incorporated the stories of Gideon, Moses, and Ruth. We have plans to hold another one in February half term for two mornings.

Our **Junior Church** flourishes, and both the children and parents seem more relaxed and prepared to interact together on Zoom sessions compared to previously in the church. Personal stories are being shared and there is more involvement with prayers.

At **Christmas**, we had a lot of positive comments around the services both leading up to and during the Christmas period. Sue covered the stories of Mary, Joseph and the Shepherds from a new angle looking at the context of their situations. These sessions led to some interesting discussions between the adults and older children whilst the younger children were busy creating pictures. They worked very well at bridging the age groups, again something that seemed more natural to achieve during a Zoom meeting.

The **Junior Church Nativity** was pre-recorded with various groups and individuals recording sections. Sue then edited together as one nativity service. This recording was then streamed live during the Sunday morning worship. It was great for everyone to be involved and the wider church to see the younger children and understand they were still involved with the church. The minister involved the junior church families by speaking to them on Zoom during the service tying all the audiences of the service together well. The recording has meant it can be shared further and reach more people. Some of the shyer children who would not have normally participate in a service were also involved.

Sue and her Team are learning new skills and becoming 'experts' at Zoom technology, video editing and live streaming!

Christingle service: Christingle bags were given out to junior church families, with leaders dropping off book gifts. Food vouchers were given to those who needed them, and all the pieces needed to make a Christingle so they could all take part in this activity in a Zoom service led by Sam. The books were funded by the Church and food vouchers were supported by Denzel's Just Giving Voucher initiative.

continued.....

Bible investigators was re-started in October with Denzel leading and Sue supporting, virtually via Zoom meetings. The group is small but seems to get a lot out of it and has been widened to include anyone from 10+ years. Denzel is keen to get the group actively involved in challenging themselves, working together and raising funds for a charity, specifically the GLO Health Card Appeal www.greatlakesoutreach.org/christmas-appeal/ a great cause that is raising \$3 (£2.50) for a health card for those in need in Burundi. Denzel is going to discuss this further with the group to ensure they are committed individually to pursuing this.

During our Connect meeting, there were a couple of other things highlighted including having a support coffee morning for parents on zoom, it will hopefully provide practical help and emotional support, under normal circumstances we would pop round have a coffee and help where possible within our capabilities, or refer, or signpost on.

In this new climate it was decided to hold a “time out” coffee break for parents. There are plans in the pipeline of how to do this and who will lead the sessions.

Parents house group: Hugh and Helen are restarting the parent house group on the first and fourth Wednesday each month at 8pm all are welcome to join, the next coming weeks are based on the fruits of the spirit.

Jean Normington and Sue Waddington, Family worker

We would also like to share with the Circuit news from young people we are supporting. Adam Best is one of the young people who has grown up through Trinity Methodist Church, and he writes:

This year I have been working in Birmingham with a charity called Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship (UCCF) which supports Christian Unions (CU) around the country.

Specifically, I have been working with the CUs at the University of Birmingham (UoB) and Aston University. I loved being a part of the CU as a student and it has been wonderful having my full-time job being sharing the Gospel on campus’

in Birmingham and working with the CU and students this year.



My role mainly entails supporting the CUs events, lots of personal study and meeting up with students 1-2-1. I have particularly focussed on the International ministry at UoB – this is one area that has been able to thrive during this online year. Otherwise, it has obviously been difficult with the lack of face-to-face events – rapport building becomes much more difficult over a Zoom call! But I am enjoying and making the most of the opportunities I still have. Long term I would like to use my Economics degree in my job but predictably finding jobs at the moment is proving a bit of a struggle. Please pray that I will continue to make the most of the opportunities God provides this year and that I would trust in His plan for me in the future.

Adam Best

FREE local courses for local people

Your **COMMUNITY** Support...

**If you
struggle with
life challenges...**

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courses

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have mental
health issues...**

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Wellbeing
courses

**If you could
use parenting
support...**

Family Learning
courses

**If you're
a new job
seeker...**

Skills for Work
courses

Free to eligible learners. T&Cs apply.

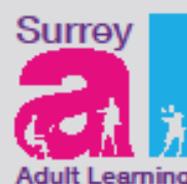


Enrol today:

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email: adultlearning@surreycc.gov.uk

call us: 0300 200 1044



Things too Wonderful for Me

Job 42: 1-6, 10



Rev Dr Sam Wells

Allan Taylor recently attended (by Zoom) the Festival of Preaching organised by the College of Preachers and the Church Times. Notable among a day of varied and stimulating contributions was a sermon on the Book of Job preached by Rev Dr Sam Wells, Vicar of St Martin-in-the-Fields. Sam is Visiting Professor of Christian Ethics at King's College London and Honorary Canon Theologian of Guildford Cathedral. He is married to the Rt Revd Dr Jo Bailey-Wells, Bishop of Dorking. With Sam's permission we are pleased to print an edited version of the sermon. If you would like to have a copy of the full text please contact Allan Taylor jat.hoschap@yahoo.co.uk

"I wonder, when you lie on your bed, how long it takes you to get to sleep? There's something extraordinarily vulnerable about lying down with your eyes closed not knowing what will happen next. It puts us in touch with our isolation. For those who sleep alone, or for those who feel alone even if they have another person asleep beside them, this can be the most terrifying moment of the day. All the busyness, demands, activity or entertainment of the last 16 hours is now ruthlessly exposed as an organised construction to avoid this merciless feeling: of powerlessness, defencelessness, helplessness.

Which makes it ironic that the very thing we long for with every fibre of our body is to go to sleep, to dive deep into the darkness of oblivion, and be replenished to face the next day. It's ironic because, for most of us, what we fear most about death is that very same thing that each night when we lie down on our bed we long for, namely, oblivion. It's one of the great ironies of our lives.

When we step back a little, and place things on a larger canvas, we confront a larger paradox. Let me set it out in three dimensions and a contradiction. We exist, first, in a world of myriad complexity, subtlety, intricacy and wonder. The second dimension is our either acute or dim recognition that behind, beyond and within all this life and existence, there is some logic, purpose or intention. The third dimension is the realisation, sudden or gradual, common or unique, that this logic is more than just a cold or mechanical chain reaction, but has purpose, intention and (and this is the crucial step) personality. This personality is by its nature shaped for relationship.

So these are the three dimensions – the world and universe are immeasurably intricate and beautiful, there's at least some level of logic behind it all, and that logic turns out to be a personal being whose deepest nature is relationship and whose deepest purpose is to be in relationship with us. So far so good. But here's the contradiction. We die. When we lie on our deathbed, or perhaps more truthfully when we lie on our bed at night and, for a change, don't seek the oblivion of sleep but

continued.....

search the darkness for meaning and hope, this is the conundrum we wrestle with. How can life end? How can that which brought life into being countenance its obliteration? How can the one who does everything to be in relationship with us tolerate the permanent elimination of that relationship?

These are the questions that dominate the book of Job which is usually thought of as a book about suffering, but suffering is really a subset of problem of death, and most people could endure almost any amount of suffering if they were sure that restored relationship and abundant life would duly follow. The real issue for Job and for us is not so much suffering, as annihilation. He says, in a roundabout way, 'This just doesn't add up. Here is a magnificent and complex universe; there is surely a logic behind beneath and beyond it; and that logic is the purpose of a God who longs to be in relationship with us. How then can there be death, if that death entails annihilation? Annihilation goes against everything else I know about existence.'

We and Job have to wait 38 chapters before we get any kind of an answer to Job's question. When God does speak, we and Job don't quite get the answer we long to hear. God's answer is to affirm the mystery of our and the universe's origin and destiny, and to assert that those mysteries lie with God alone. In other words, we're left still clinging on to the three dimensions of our quandary, but now knowing that God endorses that paradox and recognises our struggle. While not offering a clear-cut answer, God's words restore the relationship with Job, and thus affirm that our communion with God transcends death. We aren't given a concrete picture of what our lives will be like in eternity, but we *are* given the one thing we need to know: that our communion with God will abide. It's as if we're given a choice: choose the material comforts of life and lose everything forever; choose communion with God and all other things will be added unto you. More starkly, we're shown that the material comforts of life are a false insurance policy in case communion with God isn't available.

The reason why the book of Job is harrowing is not just because it's about suffering. Job is deeply troubling because it exposes something uncomfortable about most manifestations of the Christian faith. In most cases our faith is based on an assumption that if there is a God, the job of that God is to fix human problems, ameliorate existence and arrange benefits. In other words, that God is a piece of technology whose role is to improve our life. It's an utterly human-centred arrangement. A narcissistic faith. Not really faith at all: more the demand to honour a contract we never actually made – a contract by which we agreed to be born and God agreed to do the rest.

The book of Job, by contrast, maintains that the heart of all things is relationship. If there's hardship, and yet there's still relationship, it is well with our soul. By contrast, if there is prosperity, but no relationship, there's no reason to rejoice. Thus God is fundamentally, not a means to secure comforts, but the one in whom we find everlasting and inexpressible relationship. An ancient prayer puts it succinctly. 'God of time and eternity, if I love thee for hope of heaven, then deny me heaven; if I love thee for fear of hell, then give me hell; but if I love thee for thyself alone, then give me thyself alone.'

When we lie on our beds at night, or on our deathbed facing eternity, we do indeed face the loss of everything. But the witness of Job is that we lose everything – but God. The one thing we don't lose is communion with God. The one and only thing that in the end really matters. The source from which all blessings flow. So, and only so, may we rest in peace”.

Sam Wells

Foodbanks - “The Need Continues”



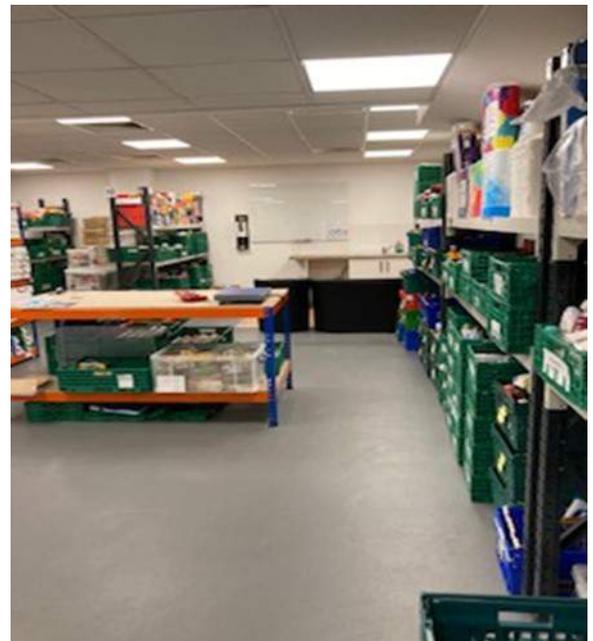
From March to December 2020 the Woking Foodbank operated out of their depot at the TITAN storage unit in Sheerwater. The space occupied by the foodbank at this facility was a corner of a vast empty floor. It was cold, dark and fairly bleak and don't mention the facilities! It was easier to cross to ASDA and use the facilities there.

As with all food banks it was a very busy Christmas period with an unprecedented demand for services. Thanks to all those who donated some seasonal cheer, not forgetting the supermarkets whose generosity continued with the regular basic staples and Christmas goodies.

The New Year has brought exciting change; not in the demand which is holding up and has resulted in more sessions, but the depot has moved. It is now located in Knaphill in a modern bright, clean and warm facility. We have access to decent 'facilities' and, very exciting, we have a kitchenette.

The Woking Foodbank continues to operate in these difficult times, supplying groceries to those in need whilst protecting the wellbeing of the volunteers. Although there is efficient heating in the new unit, the mild weather has prompted us to keep all the doors open to keep the air circulating and reduce risk of COVID-19 contamination.

The maximum number of vouchers dealt with a day has been capped at 18. Whilst this might not sound very much, a single person's order usually consists of 3 carrier bags but a large family of 4 adults and 4 (+) children could result in 12 carrier bags.



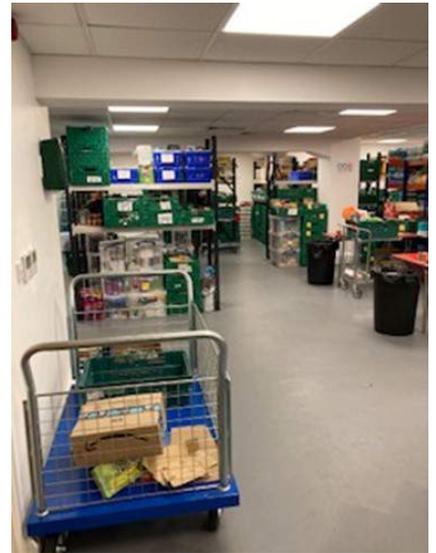
To ensure packing and timely delivery, whilst minimising contact between volunteers, 3 packers are rostered on who generally operate between 11am and 1pm. 18 vouchers require three different delivery teams; team one collects from the depot at 1.30pm, team two collects from the depot at 2pm and team three collects at 2.30pm. *Delivery teams must be two members of the same family.* Imagine if you were on delivery and your round consisted of 6 'large' families (which has occurred) you could end up trying to fit 72 carrier bags into your car!

continued.....

Before 11.00am and after 2.30pm the (volunteer) depot manager and his team are at work organising the stacking of donations, checking use by dates and rotating the items to ensure that packing volunteers select the shorter dated items first.

On top of 'standard' families we have to take into consideration family circumstances; whilst it is relatively easy to organise a delivery for vegetarian or Halal requests, the real challenge arises when trying to pack sufficient food for those who only have use of a kettle for cooking.

As noted from their Facebook page the Walton Foodbank has also been busy: members of the Walton Church are heavily involved there.



Tragically the requirement for the Foodbanks continues to grow. Please help in any way you can. Putting a tin in the supermarket Foodbank collection box is all it takes.

Linda Weedon

**GOD ISN'T
ASKING YOU
TO FIGURE IT OUT.**

**HE'S ASKING
YOU TO TRUST
THAT HE ALREADY HAS.**

Walton - on - Thames

At Walton, we have been exploring different ways of worship. With the help of one of the younger members of our Church family, we have started live streaming some of our services. This required the purchase of some specialist equipment. However, the live-streamed services can be saved as YouTube clips and as such, they are now on our website. The first one of these was with Claire and Mark Hargreaves who were in the church. It was lovely to have them back even though we were only seeing them on screen and Claire's message is still there. So, some good creative things have come from our time in lockdown.



We were having Communion on the first Sunday of the month; the church was open for prayer on Thursday afternoons. We started to plan for Christmas, with the promise that we would have Christmas and that restrictions would be lifted. We made plans to have services in the church and unfortunately this was not to be. In the week before Christmas there was a flurry of activity as we worked hard to adapt to changes coming from Government and the MC, and we managed to change Christingle to streamed and Zoom, Christmas day was streamed with a few people allowed to be in the church.

At the start of Advent, we had a Zoom Messy Church for our younger members. The craft activities were sent round to the families to make before the Zoom. Julia Monaghan led the session, and during this she asked, what would you do if Mary and Joseph came to your house? So "Las Posadas" was set up. Las Posadas in Spanish is translated as "lodging or accommodation", and in this case, it refers to the inn that Mary and Joseph arrived at.

Mary, Joseph, and the Donkey were packed into a little box and would visit various homes in the weeks before Christmas. (All carefully sanitised and delivered at a social distance!) Pictures were taken, stories were told and shared around our community by WhatsApp so we could all follow the adventures that they had.

At the Christingle Mary, Joseph and the Donkey arrived back at the Church to watch their adventures. If you go to our YouTube channel you can see our Christingle service here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ct_Vbg7vHgM&t=3s



The streamed service that was most watched in December was our Carol service. A lot of planning went into this and the reading, singing and prayers were all from members of the church family – all carefully and brilliantly edited together by Christopher Heffernan who skilled himself up on what was necessary to produce the final service. The link is here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-NADpqixG8&t=347s>

In January we did not have our covenant service. We decided to wait until we would be able to meet in the church, make the covenant and have communion together at the same time. So, we had a live stream with Rev Sydney Samuel Lake unpacking the meaning behind covenant for us.

continued.....

As we come into the new year, we are planning two Zoom discussion groups for Lent where we will be studying the York course on Hope.

We also hope to have a Zoom session with Suzette Jones on Christian Mindfulness as well, at some point in the next quarter.

We still have two prayer groups running each week which we regard as the engine room of our church, and many pastoral phone calls to keep the fellowship going and support our community where needed.

During lockdown we have not been able to worship much in the church, but we do have a big window which fronts onto a main road going through Walton with many people passing each day. Earlier in the year we had a display about Black Lives Matter. This came down over Christmas and we replaced this with lots of information about Christmas. We also gave Christmas cards to many of the shops and businesses near to the church, with a message of Hope.

One of our objectives as a church is to try and find ways to support the mental health of our church family and the wider community in Walton. In January we made a large poster display around mental health and put this up in our window. We have linked this to our website which has further resources and a weekly meditation on an aspect of mental health which is curated by Rev Julia Monaghan. We pray that the people in Walton will look at our window and know that we are thinking of them. There are many ways of doing outreach some of them we are not able to do at this time, but this is one that we can do.

Below is a link to our mental health awareness project – comments or feedback on this would be good: <https://www.waltonmethodist.org/mental-health-awareness>

The Stewards at Walton

West Horsley

We managed to have one service in December before deciding that it was not prudent to hold services until this pandemic eases. We are taking advantage of the Zoom services from St Mary's and other broadcast and televised services in addition to the printed material that Sue sends out every week. We are grateful to her, to Keith for his pastoral letters and to Asif for his weekly reflections. Hopefully, it will not be too long before we can hold services again in our chapel.

Being the age that we are has some advantages - many of us have had the first vaccine and are looking forward to the second.

Strange times, but we are continuing with weekly news sheets, regular contact and offers of a helping hand. The Bible Study group has resumed, in their own homes. They are studying Job, with helpful reflections supplied by Claire Hargreaves.

We will be participating in the World Day of Prayer service either by Zoom or by following the service booklets. This year it is being organised locally by our friends from All Saints' church, Ockham.

Margaret Faulkner

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 20 of The Wey Forward
is midnight 6 April 2021**

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 21 6 July 2021

Issue 22 27 September 2021

Issue 23 17 January 2022

**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
January 2021 (and beyond)			
5 March		World Day of Prayer	
6 - 7 March	8.00am - 8.00am	Circuit Prayer Vigil	Across the Circuit
6 April	midnight	Copy deadline for Issue 20 The Way Forward	
22 April	10.30am - 12.00pm	Coffee Morning in Aid of the Leprosy Mission - contact Hugh Bradley for further info.	Merrow via Zoom
20 May	10.30am - 12.00pm	Coffee Morning in aid of Action for Children - contact Hugh Bradley for further info.	Merrow via Zoom
5 June	10am - 3pm	Advanced Safeguarding Course	Woking
2 September	7.30pm	Welcome Service for Rev George Quarm	Merrow
4 September	All day	Circuit Day Out to Oxford — contact James Strawson	Oxford
5 March 2022	tbc	Circuit Mission Supper	Woking
9-16 May		Pilgrimage to Holy Land—contact Helen Belsham or Claire Hargreaves	

Rev Keith Beckingham — Sabbatical



Rev Keith Beckingham will be taking his postponed sabbatical from 27 March 2021 to 27 June 2021 but will then be on annual leave from 28 June to 11 July.

During this time Rev Dave Faulkner will be the Circuit's acting Superintendent.

Keith should not be contacted during his sabbatical but should you wish to send any courtesy emails (to keep him in the loop for example) then these should be directed to keith.beckingham@methodist.org.uk

Rev Dave Faulkner can be contacted via: david.faulkner@methodist.org.uk or 01483 472524

Alternatively, Sue Howson in the Circuit Office may be able to help: circuitoffice@weyvalleycircuit.org.uk or 07808 046451 (Monday - Friday 9am - 1pm)

