

The Wey Forward

Issue 20 June - August 2021

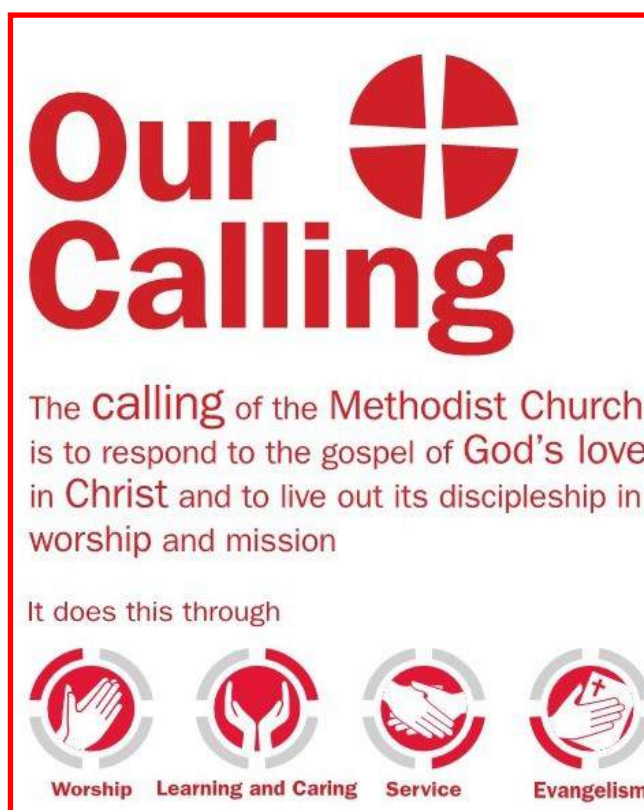


The Wey Valley Methodist Circuit

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 Acting Superintendent

Dear Friends,

Where is our hope? It's not long since the political talk was that our hope is in science, because the vaccines against COVID-19 were our route out of the pandemic. Now that is being qualified. Even those who have been vaccinated still need to take precautions.

Don't get me wrong: I value science, I have had my first vaccination and look forward to my second. I have no truck with anti-vaxxers and conspiracy theorists: they are dangerous.

But science is not humanity's ultimate hope. We have just begun our annual celebration of ultimate hope at Easter. (Just *begun* celebrating? Yes – Easter lasts fifty days in the church calendar, not one.)

The Resurrection is our ultimate hope. It isn't just the sign of eternal life, it's the promise that just as God made the human body of Jesus new, so he will make all creation new. We don't merely celebrate our hope of ultimate glory, we witness to that new creation now. As Tom Wright wrote, 'Jesus is risen and we have a job to do.'¹


But some will point to the differences in the Gospel accounts of the Resurrection. Well yes, but then isn't that partly because each Gospel writer is picking out salient points for his particular audience? And isn't it also a sign of genuineness? If the early church had conspired to fabricate the story, they would have tied up the details more easily – just as also they wouldn't have had women as the first witnesses to the empty tomb, given that the evidence of women was legally inadmissible in that society.

Others, especially many of our Muslim friends, will claim that Jesus never really died on the Cross. They say God loved Jesus too much to let him die – but while they recall Jesus asking his Father if it were possible for the cup of suffering to pass from him, they overlook Jesus also committing himself to the Father's will, not his own. And so they go on to argue that Jesus just swooned on the Cross and revived in the cool of the tomb. However, this fails to take account of the severity of a Roman flogging, which brought some prisoners close to death anyway (I'll spare you the grisly details). It also overlooks the experience Roman soldiers and centurions had of supervising crucifixions and knowing when prisoners were dead.²

There is much more I could say, but what I want to emphasise is that we don't need to lose confidence. Sure, we are a minority in society now, but since when was truth a popularity contest? Sometimes we must stand courageously for what is true, even when society or authorities are against us – remember Copernicus arguing that the Earth orbited the Sun, and not vice-versa.

What we need to do as a minority in society is witness to the Resurrection but let the manner of our witness be shaped by the Cross – we hold to what is true with firm resolve but in humility and peace.

Happy Easter season!



Dave Faulkner
Acting Superintendent

¹ *Surprised by Hope* Tom Wright (Amazon £10.25).

² *Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus* Nabeel Qureshi (Amazon £11.73)



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 as churches plan their re-opening. The details below are as things stand in mid April.

Addlestone	Addlestone is now holding 10.30am Sunday services via Zoom jointly with Weybridge. 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 is looking to re-open for Holy Communion on 16 May.
Byfleet	Byfleet recommenced gathered worship from Easter Day. 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
Cranleigh	Several of our members take part regularly in the St Mary's Sunday morning services via Zoom which are very helpful and encouraging. Re-opening is planned for 23 May.
Godalming	Gathered Sunday services recommenced on 11 April. Services can be viewed at https://guc.online.church . Services are available for viewing later on our website www.guc.org.uk . Or YouTube channel bit.ly/GUCYouTube .
Guildford	Services each Sunday went back to blended Church from Easter Day – in person and on Zoom – 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 is producing a weekly video, published at 8:00 am on Sunday. Posted in hindsight on the Circuit website and found 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 will be re-opening for gathered services on 16 May.
Merrow	Gathered Sunday worship has been suspended and the intention is to re-open on 23 May. We are encouraging members with internet access to join with other churches in the circuit. Silent Prayer on Wednesdays from 10.00am - 11.00am
Sheerwater	Zoom services publicised on Facebook, St Michael's Shared Church. Contact Tracey Francis (office@stmichaels sheerwater.org.uk) for link and password. Re-opening for gathered services from 11 April but we will still Zoom until end of June from church for those who are still unable to attend.
Stoughton	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 but began Zoomed services from Good Friday with the hope that the church will open in June.
Walton	Services from 3 January 2021 will be live streamed or Zoomed. Walton held a gathered service on Easter Day and will feel their way to full opening slowly. Any enquiries re. attendance should be made to Catherine Heffernan on waltonmethodistchurchsecretary@virginmedia.com 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 but the church will re-open for worship for Pentecost, 23 May, allowing time for most to have had their second vaccination. Asif Das will take the first service and from that date worship will be at 10.00am, rather than 10.30am.
Weybridge	10.30am Zoom service each Sunday. Contact Weybridgemethodistoffice@gmail.com for link and password. Weybridge will be re-opening for gathered services on 16 May.
Woking	Trinity opened for worship from Easter Sunday, with all our existing Covid secure protocols in place and reminded to the congregation. 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) For now, Junior Church activities remain online. 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

As spring gathers momentum we are beginning to believe that the light at the end of the tunnel is really getting closer. Meeting family and friends, and holidays all hopefully to be in our reach. God in his own time his wonders to perform. I have just had my second 'jab'. Who would have believed, just a few months ago, that science would make that possible. That silver lining is so badly needed.

Rebecca, our good friend and Church Treasurer, has moved down to Weymouth to start a new life. It is quite a challenge for us to plan the management of the church finances without being able to replace her from within the church membership.

Zoom services held jointly with Weybridge have been a lifeline while the church has been closed. Thank you Weybridge for that opportunity. We hope that we will use some of the experience to help make our services more meaningful for new members we so desperately need.

So we are settling into our new finance management, opening our church and our letting facilities again, taking with us the Zoom technology when reviewing our service presentation. As my daughter-in-law taught me, they are not problems, they are challenges to be addressed.

Always in the back of my mind are those words of the song written and sung by Don Moen, 'God will make a way when there seems to be no way.' I have read and heard of examples where, if there are those of us that will let him, he will make a way that would seem to be a miracle. If you get the chance read the book 'The Cross and the Switchblade' by David Wilkerson, you will fully understand what I mean.

The fundamental challenges for our mission in the coming year are all there. Through the efforts of our faithful members, prayer and the confidence that God Is With Us, they can and will be met.

Fred Rowe



I've just remembered a conversation I overheard while working in a church coffee bar. The minister at the time was on sabbatical.

1st old lady - I've not seen the minister for a while.

2nd old lady - He's on holiday - he's gone to Sabbatick Isle.

Jean Shepherd

Cranleigh



As I sit at the computer on this gloriously sunny Spring afternoon, I am reminded of a hymn from the old Methodist Hymn Book. It is rarely sung today, but it celebrates the re-birth of life and the glories of this wonderful world, particularly relevant as we seek recovery from the havoc wrought by COVID-19, still sadly rampant in many parts of the world today. I quote the first verse of this hymn:

'The glory of the spring how sweet, the new-born life how glad;

What joy the happy earth to greet in new bright raiment clad'.

The Victorian writer, however, does not just praise nature: he continues his hymn by extolling the even greater wonders wrought by God:

'But O these wonders of Thy grace, these nobler works of thine,

These marvels sweeter far to trace, these new births more divine'.

The hymn's final verse is a prayer:

'Creator Spirit, work in me these wonders sweet of Thine:

Divine Renewer, graciously renew this heart of mine.'

As you read this we shall have celebrated Easter: the highlight of the Christian year. Most of us will not be in church in the 'normal' way: some of us might have been able to be accommodated in our 'usual' churches, sitting apart, not singing but at least worshipping together. Others will have been seated at their computer screens receiving 'virtual' services – certainly better than nothing and indeed better than being isolated from friends and family completely – and most of us will remember to be grateful for modern technology which has enabled us to participate in services with other people. What would our Victorian hymn-writer make of all this, I wonder? He would have been familiar with outbreaks of disease (and isolation, in order to stop diseases spreading), but his delight in the gifts God sends us, and his unshakeable faith, is something we can appreciate and hope to emulate. We could do worse than make the last verse of his hymn our own prayer.

God bless any of you who have lost relatives or friends during this dreadful epidemic or who are yourselves still struggling with the effects of it.

Glenda Sewell

Circuit Books of Faith Group

If interested please contact:

Rev J. Allan Taylor on 01483 200464



A PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND

Eight days based in Jerusalem & Galilee



9-16 May 2022

with Wey Valley Methodist Circuit

led by Rev Claire Hargreaves

For full details call or email

helenebelsham@icloud.com

01483 823742



McCabe
PILGRIMAGES

What Me? An Evangelist??

Are you an evangelist? I heartily endorse most of what has been produced in the recent '**GOD FOR ALL**' report which is being widely circulated and discussed in Methodism. However, I do feel strongly that many 'ordinary Methodists' are being misled into believing that they should be evangelists, in the sense that they should be able to expound their faith like preachers. Of course we know that all Christians should be able to articulate their faith to others in some way, but not necessarily verbally. The *New Dictionary of Christian Theology* (itself rather dated, I know) contains the entry: '*While certain persons will be called to preach, the Church's evangelistic task belongs to all Christians, who have been empowered by the Holy Spirit to be Christ's witnesses to the ends of the earth*' (Acts 1:8) [my underlining]

However, the passage below from the First letter of Peter is both instructive and reassuring in this respect, which is why I've reproduced it here:

I Peter 3 : 15 – 16a, 4 : 7 – 11 (NRSV)

3.¹⁵ Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an account of the hope that is in you; ¹⁶yet do it with gentleness and reverence.

4.⁷ The end of all things is near; therefore be serious and discipline yourselves for the sake of your prayers. ⁸Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins.

⁹Be hospitable to one another without complaining. ¹⁰Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. ¹¹Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

This passage is like a little window through which we can see how early Christian evangelism took place. Peter warns his readers that they must be ready for **a conversation** with their non-Christian neighbours and fellow workers. Look at that passage again and this anticipated conversation, and ask yourself: "**Who begins to speak?**" Most people would answer "*The Christians*", and that indeed is what we should expect, because usually we think of evangelism in this way. ("We have a gospel to proclaim..." etc) In other words, Christians – normally those who are gifted at speaking e.g. preachers etc. – go out and tell the non-Christians the good news. Certainly that is what Paul did, and many thousands of evangelists since.

But in I Peter 15 however, this is not the case. It is the **non-Christians** who begin the conversation! i.e. "... *when anyone challenges you to justify the hope which is in you.*" Peter is warning the ordinary Christians that they will be questioned and challenged, and that they have to give an answer. **An answer to what?** "*To the hope which is in you.*" Ordinary people often feel shy about evangelism and think that it's really the job of the 'professionals', partly out of a sense of modesty, but partly because they expect non-Christians to ask difficult questions that relate to complicated points of doctrine.

Now I suppose we could say that it's a question of semantics, but throughout my ministry I have encountered many faithful, devout Christians who have been frightened, dissuaded and made to feel guilty because they were told they had to be evangelists, yet did not feel either able or called to do this. One comes to mind: an elderly lady who had resisted becoming a member of the Methodist Church (in the Circuit where I served in the 1980s) because she was told that she would be required

to give a public testimony and read a lesson in church on a Sunday. Thankfully the outcome was that she was dissuaded from her misconceptions – her **witness** (which is the key word in my view) was to struggle down the aisle (she was crippled) to take her first Communion at the rail – an incredibly moving experience for all present.

I do believe that *all* Christians are called to **witness** to their Lord or, as I would sometimes put it, 'to make God real to people'. But this can be done, as we all know, by an act of kindness, a letter, a phone call, a visit, a cup of tea and a thousand other ways that may or may not use words, and do not necessarily fall into the category of articulating Christian doctrine. Many people are simply not able to do this – whether because of shyness, lack of education or a dozen other reasons. Perhaps those who insist on using the word 'evangelise' are themselves the product of their own 'words-based' education.

Some years ago there appeared a series of **articles in the Methodist Recorder** written by people who had been converted as adults. Their experiences were quite varied of course, but one in particular stayed in my memory. The writer was a local preacher in his forties, who was converted whilst on National Service in the Army. He was a self-confessed bully, a loud-mouthed, uncouth young man at the time who threw his not inconsiderable weight around, frequently under the influence of drink. In his barracks was a lad, younger than him (about 19, I suppose), who used to say his prayers every night by his bed – and who became the butt of much of his attentions. He wrote:



“One night I came in from a night of drinking, and staggered towards my bunk. I’d been sick already, I was covered in rain and mud, and I was in a filthy mood. As I was trying to undress myself, I saw this young lad kneeling by his bed, saying his prayers quietly to himself. This infuriated me. In a drunken rage I threw my boots at him, and then I can’t remember any more until I woke up the next morning. The first thing that came into my mind was, ‘Where are my boots?’ Then I noticed that they’d been placed at the foot of my bed, and that they’d been cleaned. That was the beginning of my Christian journey. All my life I’d been brought up to believe that if someone hurt you in whatever way, you hit back – only twice as hard. But this lad, in his quiet and unobtrusive way, changed my life, and for good.”



I'm sure it's a case of using every gift we have to make the love of God in Christ known. There's a desperate need for it today, as you would agree. I am saddened by the fact that in all the news coverage (I confess to watching BBC mainly!) concerning the pandemic – the stories of community life; the struggles in hospitals to care for patients using woefully inadequate resources; the cries of anguish from the bereaved, the suffering, the frightened – that in all this there is virtually no mention of God or what the Christian faith has to offer.

I hope as Methodists we don't over-simplify the whole area of mission. Goodness knows, John and Charles Wesley were supreme pragmatists and used all the means at their disposal. I am a supernumerary minister, and still (until I get too old or infirm!) an evangelist. Not every person is called to be one. **But we are all called to witness** to that which we hold most precious – the love of God for the children of his creation. The greatest test of our preaching, evangelism, witness – call it what you like – is whether or not people can see it's true for us. That is the challenge before us.

Barrie Tabraham

The Town That Beat Loneliness

By most reckonings, Frome (a town in Somerset 13 Miles south of Bath, with a population about a third the size of Guildford) would be regarded as an unremarkable market town at the eastern end of the Mendip Hills. So what is special about Frome? Is it that there are 300 listed buildings in the small town centre, or that it was voted the best place to live in the south-west in the *Sunday Times* (March 2021)? Significant though both these facts are, what sets Frome aside from other towns in the UK is that it is ***the town that beat loneliness***.

The way in which it did this is engagingly charted in *The Compassion Project*, Octopus Publishing Group 2020, 228pp Amazon £9.61 Kindle edition £2.99. This book was written by Dr Julian Abel (a recently retired palliative care consultant who was joint leader in 2013 of the “Frome project” with Dr Helen Kingston, the town’s lead GP) and Lindsay Clarke (a Whitbread award-winning novelist living in Frome). It sets out the case for hope and human kindness. It advocates a culture in which individuals flourish and bring their talents and gifts to the communities in which they live.

“Unanticipated possibilities emerge, presenting fresh ways of addressing what previously appeared to be insoluble problems – and hearts are lifted”. It shows that “through daily mindful acts of care and kindness we are capable of changing things for the better, both inside ourselves and for the world around us”.

The book concludes with a “Manifesto for Compassionate Communities” citing the key areas of education, business and media, politics, health and welfare and the environment, and calling on all religions “to respect diversity of belief and to embrace compassion and kindness as fundamental human values that transcend differences of creed and practice”.

James Strawson



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.

Children & Youth Worker



- Are you passionate about bringing the gospel to young people?
- Are you a motivated self-starter?
- Do you have a flair for creative thinking to inspire, mentor and support our young people in their exploration of the Christian faith?
 - Are you energetic?
- Are you prepared to get stuck in with a variety of activities and games that bring our youth group together as a unit?

We would LOVE to hear from YOU.

APPLY NOW!

waltonmethodist.org/work-for-us

Godalming United Church

We re-opened for face-to-face morning worship at 10:30am on Sunday 11 April in line with Step 2 of the Lockdown easing road-map. This followed government guidelines. Work on cleaning and redecoration preceded this happy day – being taken care of by “Mr Property” John Drake. The Covid restrictions followed in the autumn have been put in place again. Attendance is restricted to just less than 50, and booking is essential – please ring 01483 860683 or 01483 420459 if you would like to attend. Masks will be worn, and spaced entry is via the foyer.

Sunday services will continue to be streamed 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.

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

Looking ahead, we plan to support **Christian Aid Week 10-16 May** as fully as circumstances allow. Our CA co-ordinator Muriel Clark has attended the CA Supporters' Virtual Conference and shares ideas to think about different ways to joyfully celebrate and raise funds. For example:

Have you or your loved ones had your Covid vaccination? Give thanks for your vaccine with a donation to help protect our global neighbours while the vaccine is out of reach to them.

Virtual events for you to organize:-

- * Craft and Chat;
- * Make a joint cookbook;
- * Stay at Home Quiz (Zoom or email);
- * Big Brekkie (own food but enjoy the chat);
- * Keep Fit Workout;
- * Dress up and Chat on Zoom;
- * Haircut;
- * Watch online film 'Thank you for the Rain';
- * Join the CA 300,000 Step Challenge for the month of May;
- * A sponsored litter pick;
- * Plant and vegetable sale at your gate

How to donate: information can be found at <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/>

Need help? - then email helloatchristian-aid.org

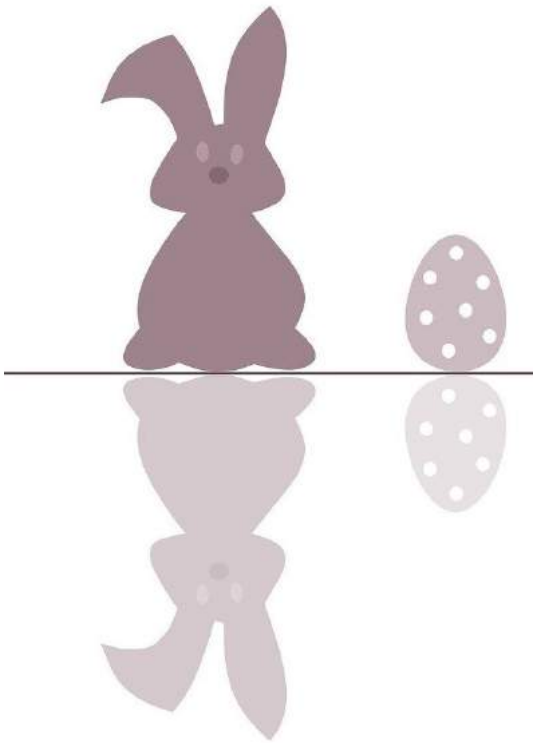
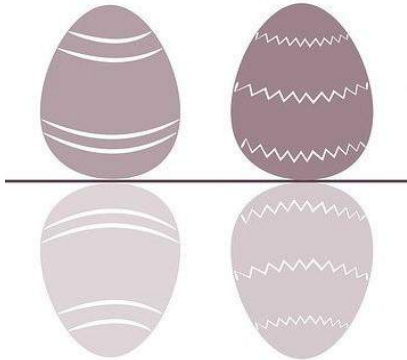
Godalming United Church Christian Aid Week Events: Daily devotionals; Church Members' Sponsored Steps Challenge; Virtual Quiz Thursday 13 May at 7.30pm. Email for details murielca21@btinternet.com

And further ahead we are hoping to have the trailer for a collection for the Whitechapel Mission for the Homeless in East London probably at the end of June/beginning of July, but this has yet to be confirmed.

Nancy Wilks



Godalming United Church's
Easter Egg Tree



Guildford St Mary's

Toes in the water

Whilst it's great that we have signs of churches and other activities opening up, questions which we have been pondering in recent months now come front and centre and have to be faced.

From a worship point of view, how can we successfully combine physical worship (without hymn singing) and online participation so that everyone feels involved? How can we help those who haven't participated online to re-engage going forwards? How do we get back into the habit of physical worship and socialising which we've missed so much and how do we make the most of what we have learned?

Many with roots from Methodism having been 'born in song' may struggle with Church worship where we can only listen to an organ play or other people singing on recordings; indeed, some may prefer to sing along from home online rather than do more than hum in church!

Beyond our worship, how far will people prefer to participate in meetings online rather than heading out to physical meetings where they still have to distance, take precautions and miss out on the usual catering?

Looking outwards, the changing shape of town centre life will undoubtedly affect some of what we do. A very significant part of our ministry at St Mary's is outreach to people visiting or using town centre facilities and over the last year footfall in Guildford has diminished dramatically (just look at the amount of car parking space available compared to the usual busyness). With the closure of many shops and leisure facilities, as well as people's changes to shopping habits, what will the longer-term impact be? On St Mary's doorstep, we can expect major changes from the redevelopment of the Debenhams' site.

In the run-up to Easter, we dipped our toes in the water by opening for several sessions starting with the National Day of Reflection and in Holy Week - it was gratifying that, despite there being far fewer people in town, over 100 chose to drop in when we were open for private prayer, with a significant number choosing to walk our Easter Pathway. We hope to be able to build something around Thy Kingdom Come in the days leading up to Pentecost.

Until Guildford's nightlife resumes, our evening opening remains suspended but we hope to resume Night Vision before too long and work more closely with Street Angels to offer a welcome more frequently in the evenings.

What is clear is that opportunities for outreach are very definitely still there but we must be open to change and to adapt, as we must for worship.

In looking at how to change, our Lent Reflections have provided some really helpful insights which extend way beyond Lent. They were very thought-provoking and encouraged us to look at how in our lives we can share with other people the Story of Jesus and God's love. The reflections were based on *Living His Story* by Hannah Steele, Director of St Melitus College, London (Amazon £7.62, Kindle £5.69) which examines how, in very ordinary and non-challenging ways, we can witness to God's love in our lives. We don't need to be Preachers or Evangelists to be effective witnesses – go on, dip your toes in!

Nigel Campion-Smith



John Harlington Oborn

1940 – 8 March 2021

In 1964 a young school teacher, John Oborn, who was a fairly newly appointed Methodist local preacher was holidaying in Brixham. As often happened in those days he had offered his services to the local church to take a service whilst he was visiting the area.

In the congregation on that Sunday were a middle aged couple from Weybridge, also holidaying in the area. During conversation after the service it transpired that John lived in the Epsom area. The Weybridge couple were so impressed with the young man that they persuaded the church council (or whatever it was called in those days) to invite John to preach for the Weybridge Church Anniversary. His service went down well with all church attendees and he was invited on several more occasions. News reached Walton who also invited John to lead their worship.

By the 1970's John was offering a selection of Sundays throughout the year to the Superintendent and he began to preach all around the circuit. This continued after his retirement when he had moved to North Holmwood.

For several years running John was planned to take worship at Weybridge during January/February. On each occasion it was snowy and John preferred to make the convoluted train journey to Weybridge rather than drive. This necessitated him leaving home around 8.30am and not arriving home until around 2.30pm but he refused all offers of lifts and never missed a service.

In recent years John has been active in the Dorking & Horsham Circuit and was their lay representative on the Western Area Development Group and at Representative Synod.

His funeral service took place at Randalls Road Crematorium, Leatherhead at 11.45am on Tuesday 20 April.

Linda Weedon

Virtual Art Exhibition in support of St Michael's and local artists

Don't forget St Michael's virtual art exhibition, showcasing brilliant local artists, to both support them in selling work during a difficult time and to raise funds for St Michael's Church. Proceeds are split equally between the exhibiting artists and St Michael's. The people of St Michael's, along with its charity MASCOT, deliver a range of community events including monthly lunches, a pop up cafe for primary school children, a Foodbank, cooking on a budget courses, literacy, numeracy and IT courses and so much more. Sheerwater is designated as an area of high deprivation according to national statistics and is currently undergoing a regeneration project led by Woking Borough Council.

They are offering you the chance to browse beautiful works of art from the comfort of your own home. Each month, showcasing new artists, spanning all mediums – glasswork, painting, photography, ceramics, sketching and much more. Visit at <https://stmichaelssheerwater.org.uk/virtual-art-exhibition/>

How To Handle Later Life

I have been a member of various Methodist churches in London and the South East over the years and am also the author of a handbook for older people entitled *How to Handle Later Life* (Amaranth Books, 2017). In its 1,000 pages, I explore the main choices people face as they grow older and the ways in which they can avoid potential problems. I became interested in the world of later life twenty years ago when my mother lost her sight and developed dementia. I went on to write this book over a period of more than ten years. It is relevant to all parts of the UK.

Reviewing *How to Handle Later Life*, Eric Midwinter, a founder of the U3A movement, wrote:

It would be difficult to visualise a more complete and wide-ranging compendium than this on how to cope with the pressures and perils of later age. ... Health, with more than 200 pages, housing, legal matters, finance and all other facets of later life are comprehensively and sympathetically treated, with a user-friendly structure and presentation. There should be a copy in every library, council office, doctor's practice, MP's surgery, Citizens Advice Bureau, Age UK office, if not in every household.

Commenting in the Methodist Recorder, The Rev Albert Jewell, Methodist minister for 58 years and the former head of pastoral care at Methodist Homes, wrote:

Shoard addresses in a thorough-going and balanced manner the biggest concerns and decisions people face as they grow older... Reliable and comprehensive... It should be found in every public library... As someone who has been involved in dementia care and research over the years, I find the author's chapter on this subject particularly impressive. Its 25 pages are essential reading.

Over the last twelve months, the pandemic has taken away opportunities to sell my book, whether at speaking events, conferences and exhibitions or in bookshops. My publisher has retained copies for sale, but I have bought others which it would otherwise have pulped to reduce storage costs, and am offering them **free to individuals and groups in churches working to engage with older people**. If anyone, ordained or lay, involved in work with older people would like a copy, please drop me a line at PO Box 664, Rochester, Kent ME1 9JB with your name, address and a cheque made out to me for £3.70 (to cover post and packing). For any inquiries, email marion@marionshoard.co.uk

The book includes a framework to understand the realities of growing older, both physical changes to the body and the particular nutritional, exercise and psychological needs of older people. I go on to examine the challenges growing older in Britain today can bring in fields from housing, health and transport to finance, help in the home and social contact.

Amaranth Books' website provides further information, including the table of contents, reviews and sample chapters. My website <http://www.marionshoard.co.uk/> provides information about my background and various activities, including within the ecumenical group Christians on Ageing.

With best wishes,

Marion Shoard





Circuit Day Outing to Oxford

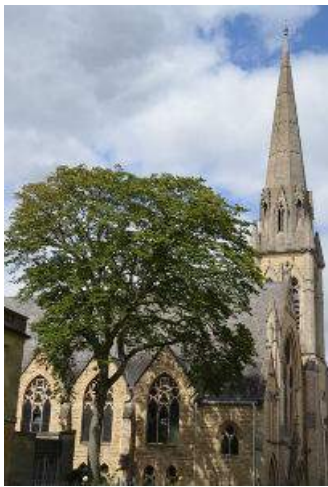
Saturday 4 September 2021



TIME TO SIGN UP!

Subject to Covid-19 travel restrictions being relaxed, a CIRCUIT DAY OUTING TO OXFORD will take place on 4 September. This will include 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.

Travel will be by luxury coach (Gastonia of Cranleigh) with on-board toilet and complimentary hot drinks.



Wesley Memorial Methodist Church -
our base for the day

COST £27.50 per person
includes tea/coffee biscuits on arrival in Oxford
GUIDED WALK OF OXFORD LOCATIONS
ASSOCIATED WITH THE WESLEYS £4 on the day
PICK-UPS in Cranleigh, Godalming, Guildford,
Merrow, Woking and Walton-on-Thames

If you would like to join us please send a cheque* payable to *WEY VALLEY METHODIST CIRCUIT*
to JAMES STRAWSON, 5 FORTUNE DRIVE CRANLEIGH GU6 8DH

BY THE END OF JULY

Please include the following details with your cheque -

- ◆ Your address
- ◆ Names of those travelling
- ◆ Where you will join the coach
- ◆ Do you want to take part in the walk? (*about 2 hours level walking*)
- ◆ Mobile contact number for use on the day of the outing
- ◆ Usual contact number *if different from contact number for the day*

****Cheques will not be paid in until mid-August just in case there are any changes to government regulations which mean that unfortunately the trip has to be cancelled.***

If you have any questions please contact James Strawson on 01483 276075 or by email strawsons@hotmail.com

James Strawson

Bookshelf



Another selection of general interest books with Amazon prices (April 2021). Some of these books may be available in supermarkets at significant discounts.

Many different kinds of love – a story of life, death and the NHS Michael Rosen, Ebury Press 2021 269 pp £11.22 (Kindle £9.99) This illustrated book combines stunning new prose poems by one of Britain's best loved poets and the moving coronavirus diaries of Emma-Louise Williams, his wife, and of the nurses and doctors who looked after him for many months

Failures of State Jonathan Calvert and George Arbuthnott, Mudlark/Harper Collins, 2021, 426 pp £15.00 (Kindle £9.99) A forensic examination in four parts by the *Sunday Times* Insight Team of how the UK Government responded to the Pandemic (i) sleepwalk into disaster (1/20-3/20); (ii) the reckoning (3/20-4/20); (iii) the same mistake twice (4/20-12/20); and (iv) the final reckoning (12/20-1/21). It is hard to envisage how the "official inquiry", which will no doubt take place in due course, will provide a clearer chronology of events.

Becoming Michelle Obama, Penguin Books, 2018, 440 pp pbk £9.65 (Kindle £7.99) With a new introduction specially written for the paperback edition, Michelle Obama describes her triumphs and disappointments, both public and private, with unerring honesty.

Being the Supervet Noel Fitzpatrick, Trapeze/Orion Publishing Group, 430 pp £10 (Kindle £9.99) Noel Fitzpatrick (Director and managing clinician at Fitzpatrick Referrals and a professor in the University of Surrey's School of Veterinary Medicine) on his relationship with the animals that have comforted him, anchored him and quite literally saved his life.

Dear England Stephen Cottrell, Hodder & Stoughton, 2021, 172 pp £10.99 (Kindle £6.99) the new Archbishop of York writes about Finding Hope, Taking Heart and Changing the World - and how Christian Faith can make sense of life.

The power of praise Sally Jeffree, Freedom Publishing, 2021, 212pp £10.99 pbk – 100 daily devotions to help us live a victorious life of praise by the founder of the Christian Charity *Faith in Action*

Britain's Lost Railways John Minnis, Aurum Press 2014, 192 pp £23.45 **£6.00 in some WH Smith shops while stocks last** How our finest railway architecture was destroyed during the 20th century – includes a photograph of the long-forgotten half round house Guildford train shed excavated from a chalk hill at the southern end of the station.

James Strawson

Cranleigh Methodist Church strawsons@hotmail.com

Contact James if you have a book you would like to include next time



Merrow

We are still not sure what the “new normal” is going to look like but almost certainly, barring any unforeseen developments, it will include gathered worship at Merrow this Spring/ Summer with all systems go for our planned reopening on the morning of Pentecost Sunday, by which time hopefully almost all of our members will have had their second jobs. As yet it is uncertain what guidelines will be in place re. seating, etc. as we move forward. We are being advised “that all legal limits on social contact should be removed from 21 June” - but “guidance on social distancing may continue”! We have just decided to finesse the protocols, booking arrangements, etc. nearer the time when hopefully clarity will prevail!

Asif is due to leave us at the end of July and he is planned to take our Anniversary Service on Sunday 18 July followed hopefully by a celebratory lunch. Again we are anticipating there will be new guidelines and linked protocols re. catering but if the sun shines and the rain stays away we could potentially all sit in the back garden of the Church. Wouldn't that be wonderful!

(Having just read through the above, I realised I had used the word “hopefully” in each sentence so thought I had better look for synonyms to use instead. The first definition of “hopefully” I found was “God Willing “ so have decided the usage is appropriate after all.....)

Given the level of future uncertainties and the impact this could have on the shape of gathered worship, we are taking steps to ensure that going forward we should be able to host remote worship services when and if required. The first action point has been to improve the strength of our wi-fi throughout the premises and with the invaluable assistance of Christopher Heffernan from Walton, we have also been able to specify the streaming software, cameras, etc. we will need, so watch this space! In the meantime we are continuing with our monthly Zoom charity coffee mornings. On 17 June this will be in support of Traidcraft and on 15 July the Alzheimer's Association. After running Zoom Discussion Groups through Lent we are also looking to see how we can continue similar initiatives through the Summer until we are all able to meet again face to face, which is where we started this article.....

Hugh Bradley

Stoughton

The last year has brought so many changes to our lives and I think it unlikely that what we knew as 'normal' will return. It is with the wonders of technology that we have been able to meet virtually and allowed meetings and worship to continue in a way we could never have imagined. Our thanks go to all who have made this possible. However, through the wonders of science there is now hope that we can begin to meet again with family and one another.

Sadly, we have lost five dear members of our congregation in the last year, none of them to Covid, and many will remember Frances Roberts who was also a local preacher in our circuit. All are greatly missed at Stoughton.

We hope to resume gathered services in June for the Church Anniversary celebrating 126 years of witness in Stoughton. Even though we may still be under some restrictions it will be good to meet together again.

We give thanks for the ministry provided by Asif during his time here and send our prayers and best wishes to him and Martha as they prepare to leave our circuit.

“New tomorrows, brand new plans, all of them are in God's hands”

Linda Macbeth

THE
FOURTEENTH

ENGLISH MUSIC FESTIVAL

Join us at the English Music Festival for a thrilling weekend of music-making in spacious and beautiful St Mary's Church, Horsham:

- Celebrated baritone Roderick Williams singing Gurney and Finzi
- The Orchestra of the Swan playing Holst and Vaughan Williams
- The 7-piece New Foxtrot Serenaders play 1930s dance band music
- The Armonico Consort perform Handel and Purcell
- Piano, chamber and songs recitals – music by Parry, Billy Mayerl, Bliss, Howells, Warlock, Sullivan, Bax, Ireland and Delius

28-31 MAY 2021

HORSHAM, WEST SUSSEX

www.englishmusicfestival.org.uk

Book at www.englishmusicfestival.org.uk/2021-may-festival/box-office.php. For a postal booking form or further information please contact Festival Director Em Marshall-Luck on 07808 473889 or email em.marshall-luck@englishmusicfestival.org.uk.

The English Music Festival is returning to Horsham this May with a series of concerts and talks. (Friday 28 – Monday 31 May 2021).

The English Music Festival celebrates the music of British composers of all eras, with a strong focus on the Golden Renaissance of English Music: the late-nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries. We set this in context with early music, folk and jazz, and have commissioned many works from leading contemporary composers. As well as our May and Autumn Festivals we hold concerts throughout the year worldwide, and have an acclaimed record label, EM Records, and publishing arm, EM Publishing. Join us at the May 2021 English Music Festival for a musical feast at St Mary's Church and The Drill Hall, Horsham.

Due to physical distancing, seats are strictly limited and will be allocated on a first-booked, first-served basis. We would recommend booking as soon as you are able, to ensure that you secure a seat. Ticket sales will only be available on the door if any spaces are left, which cannot be guaranteed. The EMF is following all government and World Health Organisation guidelines to keep our audiences safe. At present, this means that all our audience members, unless exempt, will be required to wear face coverings. Sanitising stations will be available in the church and our stewards will ensure that recommended distances are maintained at all times between audience members. A one-way system around the church will be in place.

For more details and to book your place please visit <https://www.englishmusicfestival.org.uk>

Plans to Establish a *Community Hub* at Cranleigh Methodist Church

Context

Like many readers of *The Way Forward* I spent a lot of time during lockdown thinking about the future of our church “post-Covid”, whatever that might mean.

In a sense, we envisaged the future of Cranleigh Methodist Church in the autumn of 2018, long before “Covid-19” entered common parlance. When the Church Council signed off the major building and refurbishment project to provide new side premises, it minuted that “Over £500,000 is a very considerable sum to be spent on a church of Cranleigh’s size and it will only be possible to realise the potential benefits of the new accommodation by working in partnership with organisations in the local community, including the other churches in Cranleigh”.

A “Liminal Moment”

Last summer a group of Methodists published “an Open Letter to the British Methodist Church”, which now has 750+ signatures, in order to stimulate debate about the future of the Church in a “post-Covid” environment [methodistopenletter@gmail.com]. People had been mulling over many of the points which are raised in the letter for several years and the pandemic acted as a catalyst to bring the ideas together.

“Can we seize this opportunity - this liminal space between the pre and post Covid world - to commit to not simply returning to the way things were before but rather embracing a new and more hopeful future in which local churches and circuits should be encouraged and guided to focus on mission activity which best reflects the values of the gospel working with like-minded partners.”

A “Community Hub” For Cranleigh

The idea for our “Community Hub” (working title) is based partly on Emsworth Pastoral Centre which “offers welcome, friendship and refreshment to everyone without prejudice or expectation”. [Emsworth, near Portsmouth, has many striking similarities to Cranleigh.]

We will build on the community outreach activities which took place before lockdown including - Saturday coffee mornings – with occasional hearing aid maintenance; Friendly Voices; the Refugee Welcome Group; Time Out Together; The Baby Bank (operating by appointment during lockdown). As its “host”, we will offer the “hub” to the other churches and Cranleigh organisations (eg Smart Cranleigh, Cranleigh & District Lions Club, Cranleigh Rotary Club, Age UK Surrey and many others) for community-related service and activities.

The “Community Hub” is being *planned and developed from the outset as an ecumenical venture* involving the other churches in Cranleigh as well as a range of local community organisations (e.g. Smart Cranleigh). The Church Council has established a Working Group to critically develop the concept of the “Community Hub” with a progress report to be made to our Annual Church Meeting in July.

This could be Cranleigh Methodist Church’s “liminal moment” – we are on an exciting journey!

James Strawson

Walton - on - Thames

2021 has brought new challenges, and as we move forward we pray that small improvements in meeting up will continue to take place.

We had two ecumenical Lent groups. We were delighted to have members from the URC, Baptist and Catholic churches in Walton. There was one in the afternoon and one in the evening. They were both well attended; almost too well attended. We thought at one point that we ought to have arranged three. We used the York course on "Caring for Creation". This fitted in very well with this year's Prayer handbook, which is titled "The Earth is the Lord's" - there were many prayers in the handbook that helped us with the Lent groups.

Here is a summary of what we studied.

Humanity is facing its greatest challenge: Climate Emergency – previously referred to as global warming - which is leading to permanent climate change. This, along with the damage we have done, and are still doing to the environment, God's wonderful creation - means that we all must make radical changes to our whole way of life.

We found some of the subject matter to be thought provoking, unsettling and challenging. Some of us wondered where the voice of the Church was in the debate. Often it seems to have been quiet. Many of us who care about this issue are sometimes understandably quite pessimistic about the future. That is where faith in God should make a difference. Hope for the future is not the same as being optimistic. Being optimistic suggests always looking on the bright side. A hope based on faith in God should enable us to open our eyes and see what is happening to our planet today, and still believe there is much that we can do, individually and together, with God to guide and strengthen us.

The 2020 Coronavirus pandemic continues to have a big impact on all our lives. It has important lessons to teach us about our life together on this planet, especially when we compare it to the greatest challenge of all to life on earth: climate change. Jeannette led the afternoon group and was surprised by the comments and emails that came following each session.

Following up on our efforts to prioritise "mental health" where we have run a series of meditations on our website and a poster campaign in our street facing window, Suzette Squires (who previously worked in the Guildford Diocese) did an excellent presentation on Christian mindfulness. She did say that when she was going to try a mindfulness exercise with us on the Zoom session some people might fall asleep. She was correct!! After Easter, we hope to co-ordinate a deeper dive into this topic and get her back to run a six week session on Christian mindfulness and mediation.

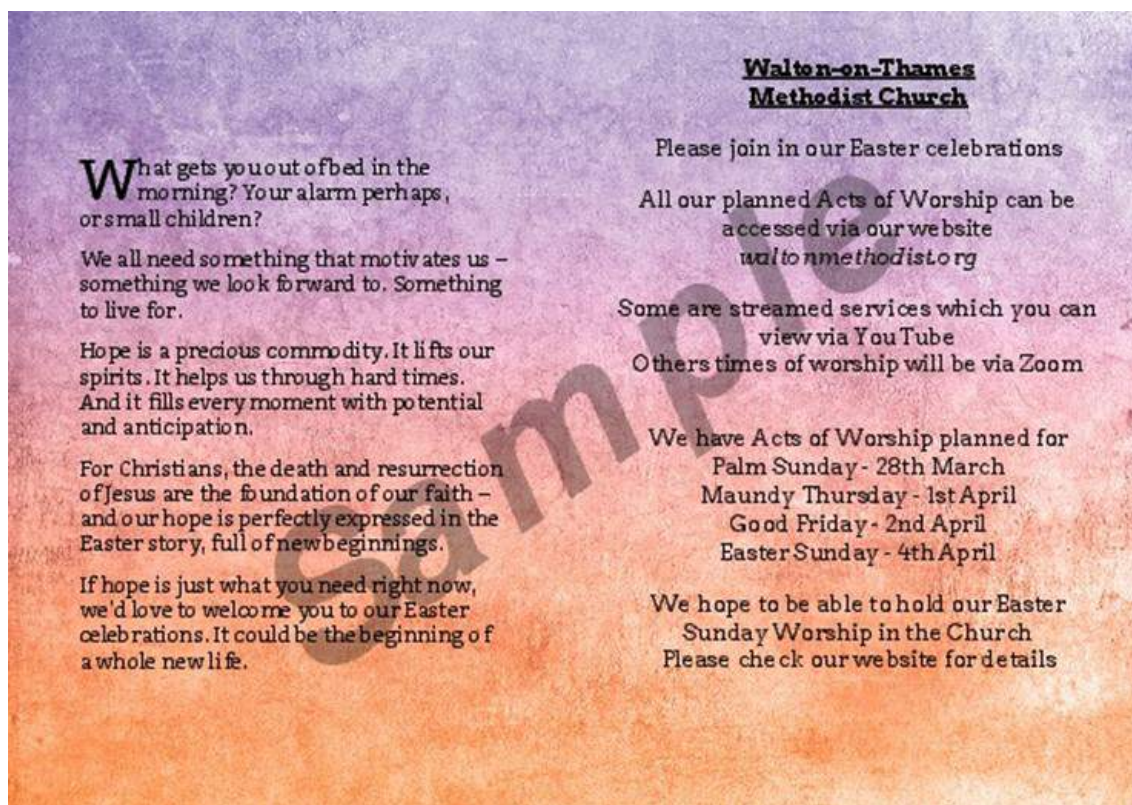
We have had two teams working hard over the past few months. The Covid team and the Youth worker team. We are very grateful to the Covid Team for seeing us safely through this pandemic so far as we meet for prayer and the occasional gathered service.

continued

We are delighted that on 1 April (so we hope it was not an April Fool) we heard from the Circuit that we can now advertise for a youth worker. At Walton, we have a lively group of young people aged from 7 to 15. Christopher Heffernan started some Zoom sessions through the winter, as we did not have Sunday school or Messy Church running. These sessions enabled the group to re-form and they have had great fun. As Christopher has now gone back to work, we are hoping to set up some more Zoom sessions with the young people. We have some expertise for this in the congregation. What we want to do is keep the impetus going until we get a youth worker who will be able to expand what we have started.

We continue to think about and pray for our local community in Walton. We gave Easter cards to all our local shops and businesses, as per the print sample below. We were encouraged by several positive responses to this initiative. We had our Church Anniversary and Gift Day at the start of March, and on our Church Anniversary we had some fascinating stories about Walton Methodist Church in past times. The Service was streamed and can be found on our website service archive and viewed on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cjV1Q-firRK&t=56s>

We also have some interesting short devotions for Lent and Easter week, which can be found on our website at www.waltonmethodist.org/wmc-online



So, these are exciting times, and we pray that God will continue to challenge us and guide us in His way as we work out His plans and purposes for us as we seek to be Salt and Light for our community.

Walton on Thames MC Stewards

Circuit Mission Supper

Save the Date

Saturday 5 March 2022

Trinity, Woking



West Horsley

We are hoping and praying that we will be able to resume services from 23 May, Pentecost. All being well, Asif has agreed to take that service - it will be his first service with us for over a year.

Meanwhile, we are continuing to take 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 did open our chapel for an hour on Palm Sunday and for three hours on Good Friday and resumed the 'chatting chairs'. Not a lot of interest but a lot of goodwill from neighbours and passers-by. It does keep the flag flying - literally, as we now have a banner saying 'OPEN'!

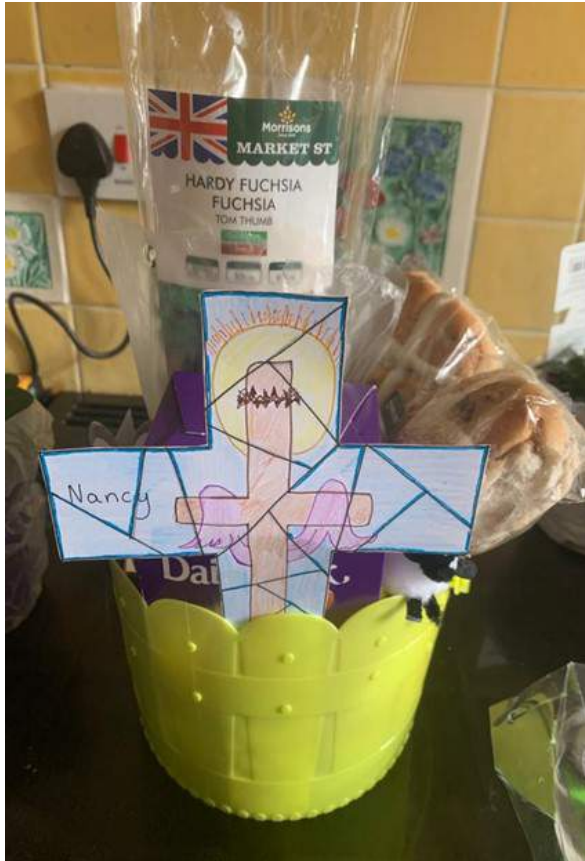
Let's hope that we are all able to return to some form of new normal after 21 June.

Margaret Faulkner

Weybridge

Our worship has continued over Zoom in conjunction with Addlestone and we have shared fortnightly prayer sessions, also over Zoom. For those of our congregation who are unable to join us for worship in this way, Jose, a member of our church, has been printing and delivering the weekly pastoral letters, worship at home sheets and the monthly church newsletter plus the Wey Forward. Our thanks go to Jose for his continued work in this area.

On Mothering Sunday, those who were unable to join us for worship received a social distanced visit from Carol and Claire who delivered a small plant in lieu of the usual daffodils.



For Easter Sunday, Claire created a special Easter basket for those who are unable to worship with us. This included an Easter card from the church, a selection of seasonal goodies and a personalised cross. One or two recipients were moved to tears by this gesture.

I have been asked by one of the recipients to thank Jose, Carol and Claire publically for executing this idea which was decided upon at Church Council.

Whilst some of the circuit churches opened for the Easter weekend, discussions around reopening at Weybridge are just starting but we hope to re-open soon. We did manage to hold an outdoor coffee morning for six people during the lovely hot days just after the rules were relaxed.

One change to come out of the long lockdown is that it has been decided to move the Clothes and Bedding bank on-line. For five years two of our members have given up at least three hours once a month to run these sessions plus all the work in sorting and storing the items and during that time they received as many – if not more - requests for help outside of the regular monthly slot. Going forward referrals/requests will be made via email or via the church website (yet to be changed). We plan a re-launch of this service later this year.

The good news for Weybridge is that all users of the church premises resumed classes/sessions week commencing 12 April.

Linda Weedon

News readers around the world are becoming very stressed as the new Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwillantysiliogogoch covid variant has been identified in Wales.

Jean Shepherd

Trinity, Woking

Over the last few months we have been refurbishing the Sanctuary space, including sound, lighting and flooring.

The work has been done by contractors, with a huge amount of support from a dedicated team of volunteers.



We were blessed to hold the Tenebrae Service in Church, on Maundy Thursday evening. The photo, by David Emmerson, shows the renewed worship space set up for the Tenebrae.

Good Friday Reflections were held on Zoom.

Easter Sunday was celebrated in the Church, with a live stream.

We wouldn't be able to do any of this, physical or digital, without the unswerving support of the church members and volunteers. Thank you to all!

Daniela Warr Schori

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 21 of The Wey Forward
is midnight 6 July 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 22 27 September 2021

Issue 23 17 January 2022

Issue 24 6 April 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
May 2021 (and beyond)			
10 - 16 May		Christian Aid Week	
13 - 23 May		Thy Kingdom Come	
13 May	7.30pm	Virtual Quiz in aid of Christian Aid Week, details from Muriel Clark murielca21@btinternet.com	Godalming
20 May	10.30am - 12.00pm	Coffee Morning in aid of Action for Children - contact Hugh Bradley for further info.	Merrow via Zoom
28 - 30 May	various	English Music Festival (See page 20)	Horsham
5 June	10am - 3pm	Advanced Safeguarding Course	Woking
17 June	10.30am - 12.00pm	Coffee Morning in aid of Traidcraft—contact Hugh Bradley for further info	Merrow via Zoom
15 July	10.30am - 12.00pm	Coffee Morning in aid of the Alzheimer’s Society—contact Hugh Bradley for further info	Merrow via Zoom
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)

