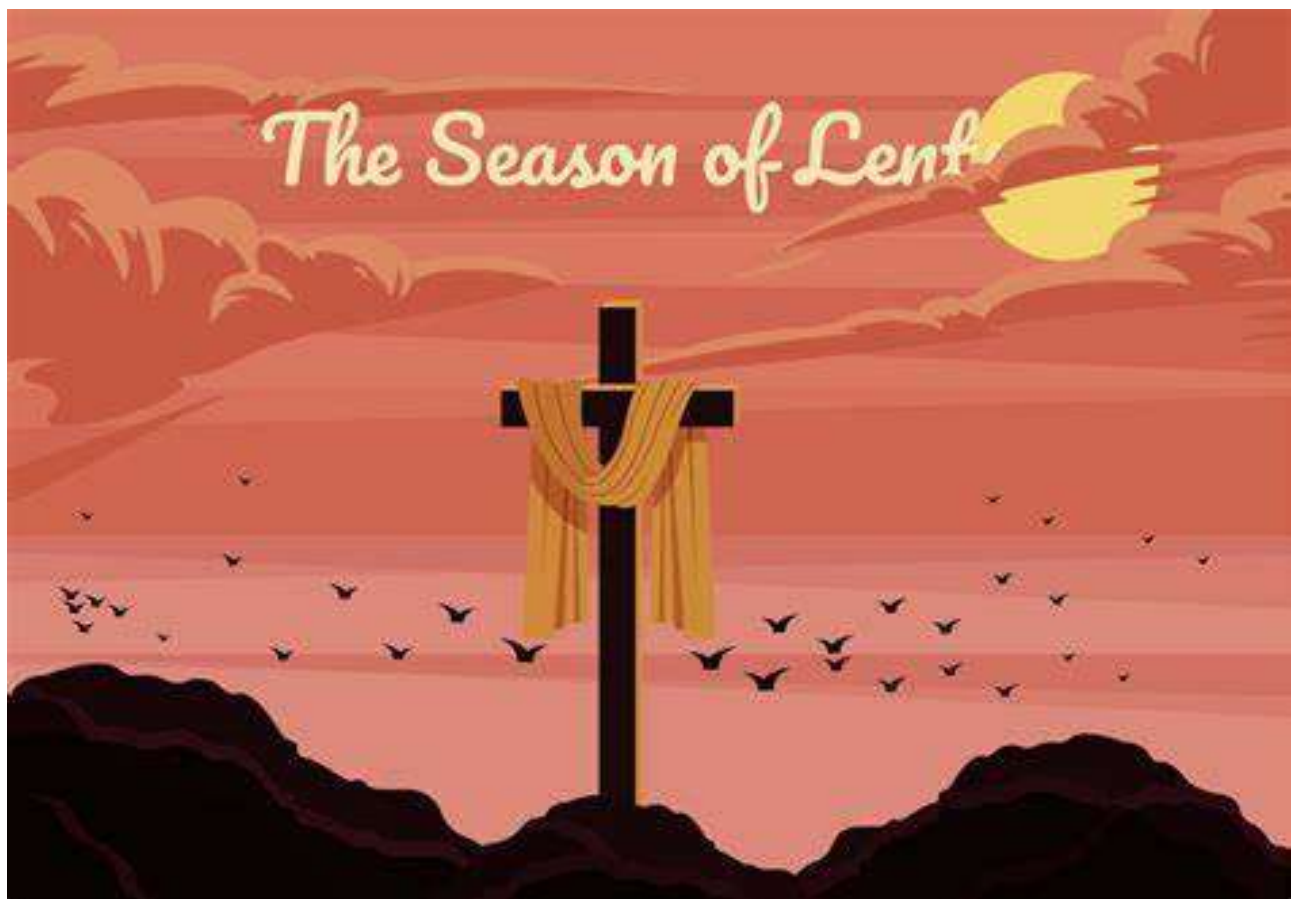


Weybridge Methodist Church

Newsletter February 2023



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.

Pastoral Message

Why's your Christmas tree still up?' came the question, in a slightly accusatory tone and, once again, I explained how Christmas and Epiphany traditionally stretch beyond Twelfth Night until we celebrate the Presentation of Christ or 'Candlemas.' Only then do the crib, the star and the tree come down.

It would be easy to give in and pack everything away straight after Christmas; to get in sync with the shopping/party season and move on to spring-cleaning just as quickly, but I like hanging on to the story long enough to take it in afresh. I like subverting what a casual visitor expects, and I've never seen anything but joy in the children who clap eyes on the tree and realise that we're still celebrating baby Jesus in January! Like Simeon and Anna when they finally discover they have Jesus in their arms, I love to be caught up in wonder of God breaking into the ordinary, in new and unexpected ways.

At theological college, we were once sent into the Salisbury livestock market, to see if we might find God 'up to something' in an unfamiliar place. My encounter with the 'chicken man' still makes me smile: Feeling uncomfortable (what do you DO to find God in a livestock market?!) I was awkwardly loitering when chicken-man noticed me and asked if I knew anything about chickens? He began by telling me their names and breeds. Before long, he was describing their habits and personalities and I was laughing as I held the bird that had driven to market on his shoulder and had stayed put, even while he filled up with petrol!

He loved these chickens. They were his life and his joy. He thought everyone should keep chickens and his enthusiasm was infectious. He was a natural evangelist. I left the market knowing that one day, I would like to own some too. Don't get me wrong (I still haven't got chickens) but in 20 minutes, he had changed my take on fowl for life. He'd taken me from complete ignorance and lack of interest to an imagined future containing fresh eggs and quirky feathered companions. More importantly, God had given me a perfect lesson in faith-sharing.

Finding God at work in unexpected places is so much more fun than finding God in the usual ways! I love that God can still take me by surprise after all these years. A couple of weeks back, some friends (not church-goers) asked if we fancied meeting in a Guildford pub for a 'Twelfth Night Garland'. None of us had a clue what to expect but agreed

we'd just head to dinner early if it was no good. So it was that we found ourselves in a packed crowd of Morris Circuit Letter 25.1.23 Page | 2 dancers, green men and amateur actors. Father Christmas was sharing a loaf of fruit cake, breaking off chunks for each us and speaking words of blessing, as he moved amongst us. Then came the large wassail cup – cider laced with so much brandy that I thought it best to pass! As I watched the broken cake and shared cup making its way around the pub, handed from person to person, regardless of whether they drank from it, I found myself recognising an unexpected holy moment, a communion of sorts that was being made amongst whoever happened to be in the Star that night.

Song sheets were handed out and the wassailing carols began: Salvation's story sung out by cheerful drinkers in holly crowns and flung together costumes. It was holy ground.

We couldn't hear the Mummers play but as they were making their way from pub to pub throughout the night, we planned to eat our dinner and re-join the throng in the final hostelry for a second go. So it was that we finished our night in the Royal Oak, standing room only, passing the wassail cup once again, meeting new people and singing salvation's story together. We squigged up close enough to hear the Mummers tale, which was a strange mix: It seemed to involve George slaying the prince of Turkey who turned out to be Father Christmas' son who was then resurrected by the good Doctor after a fight between the angel of light and the devil. Then someone danced on the ceiling (yes, really!) and the pub's rafters were marked with a chalk blessing.

We were outsiders, not part of the troupe; we didn't have costumes or know what was expected, but despite all that, we were drawn in, told a story of hope and made welcome. As we were leaving, I asked about who the group were and whether this happened every year and before long we were talking about Epiphany, the wise men and my ministry. I left with a smile on my face and joy in my heart and you know what? I may not have got chickens yet, but I have a date in my diary for Twelfth Night next year and I am absolutely going wassailing!

May each of us find God revealed in surprising places as we journey into this coming year.

Every blessing, Gillaine Holland (St Michael's Shared Church, Sheerwater)



Worship in February 2023

05 th February	Mr Andrew Gibb
12 th February	Mr Dave Ingoldby
19 th February	Rev Sydney Samuel Lake – Communion
26 th February	Rev Peter Hills



Refreshments will be served after the services.

Thank you to all those who help with refreshments.



Dates for your diary



04 February - Coffee at Addlestone Methodist church,
10 -12



Our church council meets on 02 March at
7.45 pm in the Vestry



During February we say Happy Birthday to Ardil, Lili and Grace Lake not forgetting former church family members Brenda, Kelaai & Luke (who turn 12 this year!!)

Church bits and bobs.



The flower rota is now available. If there is a date or anniversary you wish to celebrate by sponsoring the church flowers, write your name on the rota or speak to Carol.



Thank you to all who have helped with serving tea and coffee during January. It really helped to share the load. Please don't wait to be asked, come forward and volunteer.



Do you recognise me?



I am a collection box who comes out on a Sunday morning when coffee is served.

I make a regular appearances on a Sunday morning in the hope that you will put some money in me. I used to collect funds when we were raising money for the new kitchen. I now need to raise funds to assist with the major portfolio of works which are necessary during 2023 to preserve our building. My contents will be added to funds raised at the Coffee mornings we host at Addlestone on the second Saturday of each month. Thank you to all who have acknowledged me already.

If anyone else has any ideas for fund raising, especially 'fun' events, the stewards and the treasurer will be happy to hear from you.



Dave Faulkner is on Sabbatical

Since I am on sabbatical (plus some holiday) from 3 March to 18 June inclusive, I thought the circuit might like to know what I am planning to do during that time. There will be little opportunity to report back fully when I return, as I have just a few weeks back on duty when I shall be tidying up and saying farewell before we move in August to the East Solent and Downs Circuit in the Southampton District. (More on farewells soon.)*

As you may know, Methodist ministers in circuit work must take a sabbatical every seven years. It is a valuable and refreshing gift to us after a sustained period of working six days a week, including inconsistent and unsocial hours. The sabbatical allows us the chance to engage in some study and participate in some restorative activities.

I am not doing any *formal* studies, but I do plan to catch up on some major theological reading. I had planned to do this during my last sabbatical, but some of you may remember that time was taken over by my late father's declining health.

I hope to do at least one online church leadership course devised by the Canadian church leader you are probably fed up with me mentioning by now – Carey Nieuwhof. His courses are high quality but the cost of them would make me baulk from taking them if there were no help from grants or expenses.

I shall also take a shorter online course to help me learn better how to use the video editing software I use for my weekly videos. Although

the numbers watching these are now far lower than at the height of the pandemic, I still receive regular messages from people who appreciate them. Often these are housebound Christians or others in an area where it is hard to find a good church.

Pastorally, the issues of doubt and disappointment are increasingly relevant to people as we get older and also more experienced in the faith. So I shall be spending a week at the Lee Abbey community in north Devon exploring that at a conference.

For my personal benefit, I am attending two one-day photography courses run by the camera manufacturer Nikon. One is at the British Wildlife Centre near Lingfield, and the other is at a hawk conservancy near Andover. Wildlife photography isn't perhaps my main interest, but learning about a different style of photography from what I generally do should be beneficial and creative.

Finally, as the late Steve Jobs used to say just when you thought he'd ended a presentation: One More Thing. In April, my first book is due to be published. Entitled 'Odd One Out – Good news for those who don't belong', it looks at what the Gospel says to people who feel like they don't quite fit in with the majority of society. I shall be sending out some publicity, and maybe running a launch event, so that is one point during the sabbatical when you will hear from me!

See you in a while ...

Dave Faulkner

As I go to press Dave's farewell service has been confirmed as being on 16 July, 3.00pm at Byfleet followed by a tea (or bunfight as Dave described it!). Make a note in your diaries.



SAVE THE DATE

Circuit Mission Supper

5 March 2023, 6 for 6.30pm

Trinity Methodist Church, Brewery Rd,
Woking

Tickets £10 available from your
Mission Rep (*Linda Weedon*)

Speaker: Rev Hazel Forecast

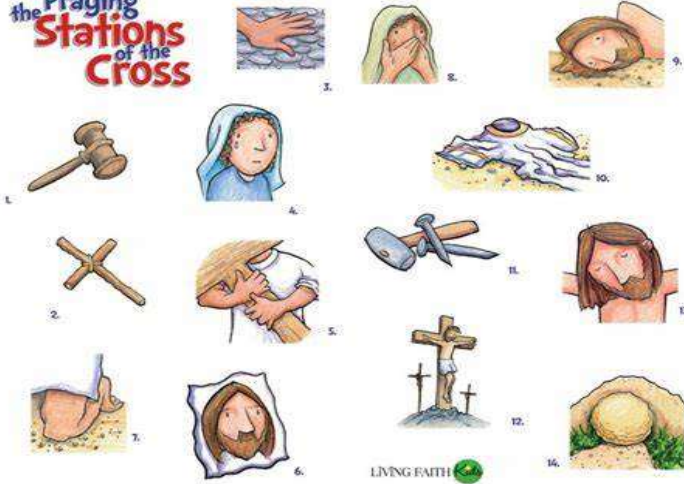
Topic: 'No Abiding City'



Attendees will need to bring their own crockery and cutlery

Good Friday

Praying
the Stations
of the Cross



Rev sydney Samuel Lake will be holding a service at Weybridge on Good Friday, 7 April at 10.30 am where we will follow The Stations of the Cross.

Addlestone and Walton members will also be invited.

He is looking for volunteers to help at this

service.

Sydney Samuel will talk about it when he is with us 20th February



For God so Loved the World that he gave his only Son.

WEY VALLEY METHODIST CIRCUIT

VISION AND STRATEGY CONSULTATION – Weybridge

With thanks to all who attended the consultation session with the Circuit Stewards on 18th January. The report from that session is below. Thanks to those who reviewed and commented on it. This report has now been submitted to the circuit team

Worship	<p>Weekly worship continues as a gathered event and we have not experienced any problems finding volunteers to fill in and lead worship when we have a 'Local Arrangement.' Although we have two teenagers we have no junior church or youth club. We currently have no bible study, house groups or any church related group outside of a Sunday. We need to look to the future and install Wi-Fi, screens and purchase a church laptop plus improve out PA system. This will enable a wider volunteer base to run the music when do not have a pianist/organist. With the reduction in the number of presbyters and local preachers, new IT provision will allow Weybridge to join a 'live stream' as a gathered congregation when necessary. There was feeling in the meeting that the time has come to remove the Pulpit from the sanctuary, and quickly. There is no PA system in the pulpit.</p> <p>Weybridge has yet to hold discussions and make a decision as to whether to register the premises for same sex marriages.</p> <p>There is also an Evangelical church 'The Place' who use our premises from 2.00pm on a Sunday. We worshipped together as one congregation on Christmas Day.</p>
People	<p>We currently have no issues with people participating actively in worship. We have five stewards and two Communion stewards. We always manage to find people to cover prayers of intercession when requested. We could perhaps have a person designated as a 'Welcome' steward every week. Our exposure is in the area of music. We have no organist, one regular pianist and the laptop backup. Sadly the pianist is likely to move back aboard when family circumstances change.</p>

	<p>Demography – our ages range from early teens (two) to early 90's. The majority are in the 60+ range. We are a multi-cultural congregation.</p> <p>Filling roles - we have no issue with filling roles associated with Sunday worship. We have a Treasurer and a Safeguarding officer. Other vital roles (GDPR, Lettings & Property) are filled by one person which is an exposure especially as this person lacks the skills and enthusiasm for property affairs</p> <p>Pastoral care – Weybridge is a small but friendly church. We have no formal Pastoral workers but most of us are in touch with each other on a very regular basis and we have a WhatsApp prayer group which includes the majority of the congregation and this is updated daily. Church members offer transport to those who are no longer able to get themselves to church.</p> <p>Youth- whilst there are two teenagers who attend worship regularly the church has no specific provision for them. We need to find ways to involve them in the service – possibly asking them to take responsibility for collecting the offertory?</p>
Finance	<p>Income – income from Collections is generally poor and certainly doesn't touch the figure required to cover the Assessment. 90 % of offertory funds come from 25% of people. We have shared the figures from the circuit treasurer which highlighted that, to meet the assessment from collections, we need to meet a target of £60 per person per month. Weybridge falls well short of that. With the general reduction in use of cash in today's society, and a reluctance of people to use direct debits/standing order, we will need to start considering use of electronic payment methods</p> <p>Our premises are well let and thus the lettings income keeps us going. We have however lost two key lets recently.</p> <p>Expenditure – this is mainly repairs and maintenance and we can cover this easily. We do need to repair/replace our church roof and think about new IT provision as detailed under worship.</p> <p>Reserves – the church has financial reserves in accordance with Connexional guide lines.</p> <p>Circuit assessment – the church meets the Assessment in full however mainly from lettings income. Collections are insufficient for this purpose.</p> <p>Risks – we currently do not face any financial risks</p>
Property	<p>Condition – reasonable although a major redecoration is desirable.</p> <p>Suitability – the ancillary buildings are suitable for many activities and the kitchen is well equipped for use. With fixed pews the church sanctuary is not flexible although it has been used for meetings.</p>

	Likely needs over a 10 year timeframe – new roof, full redecoration, new IT and chairs to replace the pews.
Mission and service	<p>Initiatives underway – Weybridge Old Folks club is held off the premises in a building in the centre of the town however our church provides the Administrator, a committee member and three regular attendees. In addition some of our ladies help with refreshments on a Rota basis.</p> <p>We have a member who is heavily involved in the foodbank – again not on our premises.</p> <p>We do provide a venue for two AA meetings at a very low hire rate to support their programme.</p> <p>Opportunities – we could resume the Bedding & clothes Bank on a monthly basis if there was an appetite for it and we had more volunteers willing to join a Rota.</p> <p>We have someone willing to run a Bible Study/Lent Group – either gathered or on Zoom, if people have an appetite for it and guarantee to attend.</p> <p>Resources to pursue them – it is generally agreed that if someone is passionate about a missional area they will commit to organize and partake.</p> <p>We do view our whole building as a Mission to the community. Whilst it is undeniable that the church makes a good financial return, we do provide a good venue for children's groups, health and wellbeing groups and addiction support groups,</p>
Ecumenical involvement	<p>What is/could/should be shared with other Christians? – Churches Together in Weybridge has pretty much ceased. In the past our church provided the CTIW chair and Secretary for many years. We were known for our attendance at ecumenical events. With the arrival of a new Rector things may change.</p>
Compliance and governance	<p>Reporting – we do our best! Connexional Annual returns are a drain on a property steward who has no interest in the area.</p> <p>Safeguarding - our Safeguarding Officer works with the circuit safeguarding team</p> <p>GDPR – is up to date. Again a struggle to get this done as we have no one responsible and no appetite for, or belief in, the process/reason.</p>
Resources	<p>Areas where the Circuit could help?</p> <p>It would be a very welcome idea for GDPR to be centralized.</p> <p>Despite great efforts with publicity Weybridge members have a noticeable lack of enthusiasm for circuit events-whether Worship or social.</p>