

St Paul's Methodist Church, Crawley
Extraordinary Times
a magazine to help us through COVID-19
Issue 16 **July 5th 2020**

A message from Rev Melvyn Cooke

Sometimes certain events and occurrences just for some reason stick in your mind. One such for me was whilst I was living in Gillingham, Kent, and I had arrived early at the Crematorium to conduct a funeral. It was a very warm sunny day, and so rather than just wait in the chapel, I decided to wait outside. When I got outside there was another couple also waiting. The lady concerned introduced herself to me as the sister of the deceased, in fact she introduced herself as now being the matriarchal member of the family.

We passed pleasantries together and she explained to me that she and her brother had been very close to one another, but in the recent 20 years as she had moved all over England, they had not seen each other very much and had grown apart. Intrigued I asked where in England she had lived, her reply took me by surprise, as she said, Margate and Ramsgate.

Now if your geography is not so good, Gillingham is only about 40 miles from these 2 towns, joined by a first class road and a direct train service. How easy it is for us to just drift apart if we are not intentional about how we do things. As you worship this week, thank you for being intentional in seeking to connect with God our Father. *Melvyn*

*I surrender all I am to you most loving God,
For resting in your presence is where I most belong.
I adore you, with all my heart, I offer you my love,
For you hold all the beautiful things, you offer us so much.
I open up my heart and soul, you fill me with grace life,
For I will always follow you, in you I will abide. Amen*

(Thanks to Rev Melvyn Cooke for filling in for Ralph this week – Editor)

Refugee Tales 2020 is happening this weekend!

From 3rd -5th July, supporters and friends of the Gatwick Detainee Welfare group will be walking, from near and far, to raise awareness of the injustice of indefinite immigration detention, and in solidarity with those affected by it. Click on the links below to find out how you can hear the stories of people with lived experience of this system, and of the journeys that brought them there. Listen in each day to talks, music events and more, live streamed at 9.00, 11.00, 4.00 and 7.00pm. Registration is needed for the evening events.

You are invited to post photos from your walks, or your reflections of the weekend on the theme of 'bridges'; structures that unite across a distance! *Ruth*

<https://www.refugeetales.org/>

<https://www.refugeetales.org/thewalkof2020>

What's On This Week

Sunday 5th July

10am *Taketime Live* join in a meditation in real time, or later by pasting <https://mixlr.com/taketime/> into your Web browser

10:45am live worship with Rev Ralph

Wednesday 8th July

2pm live prayers and bible study with Rev Ralph

Prayers at 6 & 8

As this weekend sees the opening up of pubs and restaurants, please pray that people respond carefully and sensibly, obeying the safety guidance and being considerate of the welfare of others. Pray that we and those we love stay safe and that this pandemic comes to an end.

Please pray for

Geoff being cared for at home, his wife Jean and his family

Continue praying for anyone we know who has needs known to ourselves.

Send your prayer requests to ask.stpauls@gmail.com

Permission must be received from a person before their name is put on the Church prayer list.

New President and Vice-President inducted



The Rev Richard Teal and Carolyn Lawrence were inducted online as President and Vice-President to the Methodist Conference for 2020-21 on Saturday 27 June. You can read about them at <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-conference/conference-2020/presidency/current-president-and-vice-president/>

Please pray for them as they embark on this year of office.

Ladies note this! The President and Vice-President designate for the following year are both women!



Rev Sonia Hicks,
President Designate 2021-22



Barbara Easton,
Vice-President Designate 2021-22

See their profiles at <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-conference/conference-2020/presidency/president-designate-and-vice-president-designate/>

Please pray for them both as they enter their year of preparation.

Changes in the Circuit staff – the process explained

By now you will be aware that Rev Ralph and Rev Felicity will be leaving the Circuit in August 2021. Rev Clive is seeking a one-year re-invitation. I am sure that you are already praying for them all, and the next phase of their ministry.

There are some things that distinguish Methodism from our partners in the Gospel, and the Stationing process is one of those distinctives. Even the word we use speaks of what is at the heart of the journey that we have now embarked upon. Whilst others may speak of a being 'called' to a congregation or church, and others being appointed to a church or congregation, in Methodism we are stationed to a Circuit by the Conference.

Every Methodist Church always has a Presbyterian in Pastoral Charge of a congregation, or society, as each Church is historically known. This Pastoral Charge does not mean they are the 'leader' of the Church, but that they have pastoral oversight. In the majority of situations all Presbyters have oversight of more than one church.

The process that we are now engaged in is to determine what the vision that the Circuit Churches have for their future and engagement of ministries. This will help us determine the gifts and skills required in our staff to serve the Circuit and how best to share responsibilities amongst staff in future. This is then formed into profile documents, which are submitted to the Stationing Group.

In early October, Circuits looking for Ministers, and Ministers looking for Circuits, receive all the profiles from across the Connexion that pertain to them i.e. in our case all Ministers looking for Circuit appointments.

We identify 10 Ministers in whom we are interested, but it is the responsibility of the Stationing Group at Connexional level, who will select a minister to be invited to visit. The Senior Circuit Steward will be notified of that name on 5th November, if there is a possible match. The matching of Ministers to Circuit is not guaranteed, as each year there are more Circuits looking for Ministers than Ministers available. If a match is made then a visit to the Circuit is made by mid-November, and a decision from the Minister and Circuit is communicated within 48 hours of the visit. If no match is made, then the process continues into round two, or round three over the next few months.

Once we have obtained a match, or if we are unsuccessful, then we can discern how best to deploy the gifts and skills of the Circuit staff across the churches of the Circuit, ensuring that all churches have a designated minister with 'Pastoral Charge'.

In June of the following year the 'Stationing of Ministers' is agreed at the Annual Conference, and it is not until that point that we can say with absolute confidence that a Minister will be joining the Circuit. All ministers are under the discipline of Conference, which has the authority to change 'station' up until Conference, although this rarely happens. *Rev Melvyn Cooke*

Action For Children Sunday

In other times we would have been recognising the valuable work of *Action for Children* with a service and cash collection on Sunday 12th July and by holding a fundraising Open Garden at my house. Along with Saturday Coffee Stops in April and October and more fundraising at Christmas, in 2019 we were able to send £1,110 to Action for Children. While we are unable to hold the usual events, we still need to support this essential work, so can I ask you please to make your donation this year either by telephone to 0300 123 2112 or through the AfC website <https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/>. Many thanks for your support in the past and going into the future. *Sheila*

Barry's Isolation Diary 13 – Small triumphs and great delight

Sheila will tell you that for years I have complained about the range of sizes made by several well known manufacturers/retailers. Quite often, and more so in the last few years, I will see a style/design I like only to be told "Oh sorry we don't stock/make it in that size". Many years ago this was further exacerbated when I was told on enquiring for my size that M&S Crawley was apparently deemed too small to stock the extreme sizes in their ranges so that the shortest length Trousers (30" waist/29" inside leg) and size 6 shoes were only available to order. Although curiously there always seemed to plenty of choice if you were 40"+ waist and 29" leg. To be fair this situation has been somewhat improved in recent years.

So imagine my surprise when an e-mail popped up in my inbox advising me of items reduced in the M&S sale on the reopening of their stores advertising trousers which were described as "extra short trousers" (27" inside leg). Admittedly on further investigation there were only three styles and limited colours but beggars can't be choosers. I promptly ordered a pair of trousers in a colour described as "natural", the navy ones already being sold out, and this week to my delight they arrived.

To fully understand my delight you have to realise that this is the first time in 60 years that I have bought a pair of trousers that did not require the legs to be carefully measured and remeasured, cut off and then re-hemmed. This of course has meant that, despite not being a cook, I have from the age of 16 known how to hand sew a hem and operate a sewing machine. In all these years I have only got the measurement slightly wrong once and had to resort to using bias binding to compensate for having cut them half an inch shorter than I intended to.

On subsequently visiting the online shop all three styles are now sold out in all colours. Interestingly every review pleaded for more in this size so I am obviously not alone. On the other hand, how anyone is supposed to find these extra short trousers I don't know, since the ubiquitous drop down list doesn't include the size. If it weren't for the pair now proudly hanging in my wardrobe, I might be tempted to think that it was just a mirage brought on by lockdown online shopping fatigue.

But of such small triumphs are delights made. Keep safe and God Bless, *Barry*



You can help raise funds for St Paul's with thousands of retailers when you're shopping online. It's really easy and there's no cost to yourself. Sign up at

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stpaulsmethodistchurchcrawley/>

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